THE MIDDLE EAST AFTER 9-11
TURKISH AND EGYPTIAN PERSPECTIVES

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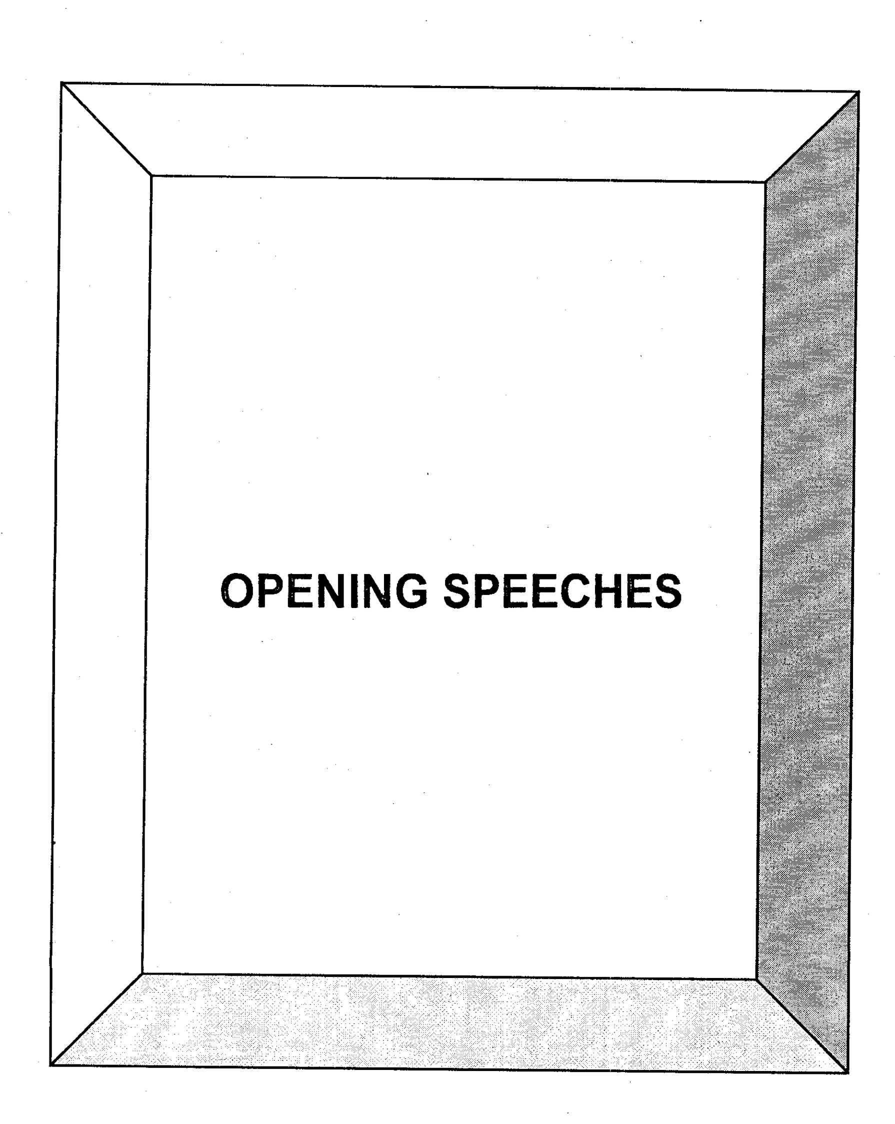
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OPENING SPEECHES

Dr. Nadia Mostafa*

Your Excellency Ambassador/ Murat Bilhan - Chairman of the Center for Strategic Research, Ambassador/ Korkomaz Haktamir - The Turkish Ambassador in Egypt, Dr/ Kamal El Menoufi -The Dean of the Faculty, Fellow Members of the Turkish delegation, my dear colleagues and contributors in this colloquial, it is my greatest pleasure to welcome you all to the opening of the colloquial on "The Middle East after 9-11: A Turkish and Egyptian perspective".

This colloquial aims at initiating new momentum to the long efforts undertaken by the Center for Political Research and Studies in studying Arab- Turkish relations. Previous studies done by the CPRS in this issue were always confined either to Arab - Turkish relations in general or Turkish politics specifically. Never -for once- has the CPRS experienced a live dialogue between Turkish and Egyptian experts, diplomats and academia's. I can site a long list of the CPRS's publications on Turkish- Arab relations but I can't site any activity similar to the one that we are initiating today.

Although the late Dr. Galal Moawed -who passed away almost three years ago- spent a long career in studying Turkey and became an expert and specialist on that issue, and I myself have had the opportunity to visit Turkey, yet this colloquial between the Turks and Egyptians remains the first of its kind whether in the Faculty of Economic and Political Science or in the CPRS.

In July 2003 the CPRS welcomed Ambassador. Murat Bilhan. It was an opportunity to figure out how the cooperation between our two centers could be developed. The preparation for holding this joint colloquial- starting in October 2003- was to be considered the departure point for this cooperation.

I hope that the two centers can conclude a protocol of permanent cooperation, which enables them to organize future joint annual colloquials. The CPRS has already concluded such a protocol with the IEP of Paris and CEDEJ, which resulted in the organization of 11 joint

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conferences, which have been held respectively in Cairo and Paris. In January 11th 2004 the colloquial titled "The European Union and the Arab region 1990-2003" was held in the Library of Alexandria over a three day period.

Finally, I am very grateful for Dr. Pakinam El Sharkawy efforts to make this meeting a true one. Dear guests, again I welcome you all, hoping that the discussions will be fruitful, offering alternatives to promote the interests of both countries. I give the floor to His Excellency Ambassador. Korkomaz Haktamir -The Turkish Ambassador in Egypt.

Ambassador. Korkmaz Haktanir*

I would like to join Dr. Nadia Mostafa in welcoming all the participants to this very timely colloquial on " The Middle East after 9/11: Turkish and Egyptian perspectives", a topic of obvious great interest both in and outside our region.

I would also like to thank Dr. Nadia Mostafa and Dr. Pakynam El Sharkawy as well as their colleagues for organizing this colloquial in cooperation with the Center for Strategic Studies of the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, represented here by Ambassador. Murat Bilhan and his team of Turkish experts.

It is my pleasure to be here this morning and to say a few words on this topic, which will be under discussion. In the course of the colloquial there will be many presentations on the various dimensions of this complex subject. Therefore, I will limit myself to some general observations on what I imagine will be the main themes of the colloquial.

The discussion topic is concerned, in my understanding, with the transformation in international affairs, triggered by that tragic and shocking event, the unprecedented terrorist attacks in New York and Washington on 11 September 2001, the event we have come to refer- I shorthand- as 9-11.

This change inevitably made its greater impact on the Middle East -the wider Middle East if you like- from where those terrorist attacks originated. This has created an open ended situation in the region and in international relations fraught with many difficulties and dangers during the past two and a half years, a situation which still keeps evolving and has not yet taken a final shape. The responses of Turkey and Egypt during this time, as two major regional countries, were naturally important for the region and had various implications on their relations with the United States.

Speaking of change, we should note that it did not start with 9-11. The world was already changing fundamentally for over a decade before

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* **The Turkish Ambassador in Egypt**

September 11. That change arose out of a set of historical developments, which bought the cold war to an end. In this light, political scientists in the west tried to interpret where humanity stood at the end of the 1980s and through the 1990s suggesting new paradigms for the future course of international relations. Two of these grand theories continue to be relevant to what we are discussing today and they were, in a way, put to test by 9-11.

What we are witnessing- said Fukuyama in 1989- is not just the end of the cold war, or a passing of a particular period of postwar history, but the end of history as such: that is, the end point of mankind's ideological evolution and the universalization of western liberal democracy as the final form of human government.

" End of history" was misunderstood and challenged by many, and when tragedy struck on September 11, this was presented as proof that Fukayama's assertion had been totally wrong, But he explained that he had used history in a different context, to refer to " the progress of mankind over centuries toward modernity, characterized by institutions like liberal democracy and capitalism". His observation was that "evolutionary process did seem to bring even larger parts of the world toward modernity. And if we looked beyond liberal democracy and markets, there was nothing else towards which we could expect to evolve; hence the end of history".

The most serious challenge to this vision of a world progressing toward a single global system came in 1993 from Samuel Huntington who asserted that " the fundamental source of conflict in this new world will not be primarily ideological or primarily economic. The great divisions among humankind and the dominating source of conflict will be cultural. Nation states will remain the most powerful actors in world affairs, but the principal conflicts of global politics will occur between nations and groups of different civilizations. The clash of civilizations will dominate global politics. The fault lines between civilizations will be the battle lines of the future".

" Clash of civilizations" attracted a great deal of both attention and reaction. It was a rival theory to the " end of history" and while many political scientists pointed out its flaws, shortcomings and disadvantages, and despite the desirability of dialogue and understanding among

civilizations, when 9-11 came, this was regarded by some as an affirmation of the "clash" hypothesis.

These competing paradigms, one may note, both reflect a particular western perception of the future world. Within the timeframe we have covered, there were two major developments involving western intervention and which, after fermenting for over a decade, came to have a direct bearing on 9/11 and its aftermath: The first one was the end of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in February 1989, which did not bring peace to the country, but led to a long and costly civil war and growing chaos out of which emerged the Taliban in 1996, to play host to Osama Bin Ladin and the Al- Qaeda. The other was the invasion of Kuwait by Iraq in August 1990 and the Gulf war of February 1991 to end that invasion, which while achieving its declared objective, left the regime of Saddam Hussein intact until April 2003, despite Iraq's military collapse at the time and the crippling sanctions, inspections and no-fly zones imposed on the country. These two questions belonged to different political agendas and each had a political context of its own. Their treatment as part of the same agenda after 9/11, we can conclude now, lies at the root of many of the problems we all face at present.

A third question should be added to these, which of course cannot be left aside, a question of somewhat of a different order and of longer duration, but similarly a sad story of failure, the failure to find a peaceful settlement to the Israeli- Palestinian problem and the Arab – Israeli dispute in general. The recurrent failure of the search for a peaceful solution and its replacement by cycles of violence and terror have not taken a terrible toll in human terms, but have also been one of the main causes of the deeply bitter mood and resentment in the Middle East.

Against this background, I wish to turn to the aftermath of 9/11. These two and a half year since September 2001 evidently do not constitute a single continuous period. The aftermath of 9/11 was broken into two by the crisis and the war over Iraq.

It is generally accepted that 9/11 was a turning point for the United States in the first instance; in the way it saw the world and its own security or its vulnerability in that world. At that moment, the world public opinion stood with America with great goodwill. This support and

understanding for the United States continued at the time of the war in Afghanistan against the Taliban and Al- Qaeda.

Then came the second turning point in March 2003 with the Iraq war, largely eroding the international sympathy felt for the United States. This event created sharp international divisions and compounded the credibility problem that America already faced in the Middle East due to its policies on the Israeli- Palestinian question.

This second phase, involving the Iraqi crisis, the war and its aftermath, brought Turkey and Egypt closer. Following the initiative taken by Turkey in early 2003, a series of meetings of Foreign Ministers were initiated with the participation of Iraq's neighbors and Egypt. These regional conferences helped the participants to coordinate their positions and stress the importance they attached to basic principles that should govern the future of Iraq. The crucial role that the regional states can play in helping the transition of power to the Iraqi people and in establishing peace and stability was also recognized by the UN Secretary General. The Secretary General also established an advisory group consisting of the members of the neighboring states in Iraq and members of the Security Council. The Foreign Ministers of neighboring states, who have met five times so far, have decided to convene further meetings and Egypt is expected to host the next meting.

Apart from these meetings, the visit made by President Mubarak to Ankara in February 2004 also confirmed the similar views held by Turkey and Egypt on regional developments and notably on the future of Iraq.

These two phases in the aftermath of 9/11 have been followed for sometime by the public debate on a new concept called the greater or the wider Middle East, originating from American and EU perspectives respectively on questions of reform in this vast area. There have been regional reactions to this concept, coupled with efforts to develop a common approach to issues of reform in the Arab world. One notable example of such efforts has been the Alexandria meeting on Arab reform issues and the impressive declaration it has issued. The outcome of the Arab League summit meeting in Tunisia will also be important in this regard.

I was thinking that if a common understanding emerged to start translating some of the ideas from these meetings into a feasible program of transformation in the region with international support, we might find ourselves at the threshold of a third phase as of June 2004 when a number of summit meetings will take place and sovereignty -hopefully- will be transferred to the Iraqi people under the political transition agreement. Then came the terrorist bombings in Madrid and the election results in Spain, followed by controversial interpretations as to what these really signified. With these developments in the European context and their wider repercussions, we may have already moved into a third phase in the aftermath of 9/11.

I am sure our approach to the greater Middle East concept will be elaborated in our presentations, but let me just note that we see ourselves as a country neighboring this region, with strong bonds of friendship and cultural affinity with the regional countries. The economic, social, cultural and educational aspects of a regional effort for transformation would be the areas to which we would wish to particularly contribute. We strongly believe that the Middle East should not lag behind any aspects of human development and should achieve not only peace and stability but also progress and prosperity. The initiative should rest with the countries of the region themselves who recognize the need for reform. There should be a close dialogue between the international community and the regional countries. Simultaneously, genuine progress should be achieved in the resolution of key problems in the region.

Our Prime Minister has spoken strongly on various occasions in favor of democratization in the Middle East. I would like to conclude by quoting the following from a speech he made to an American audience a short while ago:

" A confidence problem exists on the part of the people of the region who desire democratic rule in principle, but remain suspicious of both the fashion with which democratization is presented and the purposes of the democratic world. This lack of confidence is felt particularly strongly by the masses that find themselves on the wrong side of globalization...

"Therefore the observation must be explicitly made: In the Middle East and in the Muslim world, suspicions linger concerning the objectives of the West and notably the US. The suspicious exist both at the level of

states, and more importantly, at the level of societies and individuals. This creates a resistance in the region and feeds radical elements and their abuse of the issue of religion.

" It is essential that policy instruments be developed that would firmly establish democratization on the basis of social consensus and enable transformation on stable grounds.

" It is obvious that putting the Arab- Israeli dispute on a resolution track would be an important element of overcoming the confidence problem in the region. One cannot assent to the insolubility of the Arab- Israeli problem... A lasting solution to this problem will have an exceptionally positive influence on. The region and the international community.

"Another critical issue is ofcourse Iraq. In this country, there is the need to construct a democracy based in social consensus within a framework that preserves Iraq's territorial integrity and national unity. I believe, only on this basis can a democracy, which is at peace with itself and with its neighbor, be achieved.

Thank you very much for your attention.

Dr.Kamal El Menoufi*

Dear guests, I want to express my appreciation and thanks to Ambassador. Korkmaz Haktanir- The Turkish Ambassador to Egypt, Ambassador. Murat Bilhan- Chairman of the Center for Strategic Research and Dr. Nadia Mostafa, the Director of the Center for Political Research and Studies.

Turkey and Egypt are two important core states in the Middle East region. Promoting cooperation and exchange between the two will lead to a more regional balance and stability. No one can argue that our region is facing a turning point in the post 9/11 era. Many challenges had to be faced and many problems had to be solved. To design a better future, we need all regional efforts to collaborate, especially between big regional powers like Turkey and Egypt. To achieve such a target many fields need to be covered whether political, economical and cultural. Coming first in all those fields of cooperation is enhancing the academic and scientific dialogue.

By holding such a gathering between diplomats and scholars we present an essential step in the right way. Deep academic research is needed to serve the real politics, on the other hand scholars must benefit from practical expertise. We must extend such an interaction between research and policy to the level of dialogue between states, and more important between two big countries like Turkey and Egypt, it is exactly what our mutual relations lack. Regional partners need to intensify their mutual meetings, conferences and visits. It is more important to make such inter-exchange in this crucial phase.

As two influential actors in the Middle East, Turkey and Egypt's mission is even greatest. In a time where our Muslim nation is accused of terrorism and extremism, we need to unify our visions and to organize our moves in order to achieve a higher degree of effectiveness. A lot of issues

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have to be discussed from within our region to produce indigenous and modern perspectives that suits our cultural and social specifities. We – as Turkish and Egyptians – must rely more on the brains of our writers and the expertise of our politicians to find a balanced outlook, the shorter road, the more direct ways and the most effective tools to face all the huge challenges that our people have to deal with.

Once again, I thank you all and I appreciate the efforts done to make this important gathering possible. I hope that this event will only be the beginning to widen and activate cooperation between both states.

Ambassador. Murat Bilhan*

Dear Dr. Nadia Mostafa, Distinguished members of the academia, dear colleagues and guests, Today we have a great pleasure of starting a very useful round of discussions about topical and burning issues concerning our region, the geography which our two countries share.

The development of the agenda, generally in the world and particularly in our region, is quickly changing since the very short time when we first started about our joint project of these present day discussions, I mean only during the course of several months, many things have changed. Certain concepts such as the "Larger Middle East" have transformed into foremost important concepts of our day. Several months ago, other lively issues were on top of the agenda, some have now become secondary issues and some new topics have emerged.

During our deliberations today and tomorrow, we shall try to elaborate more in detail with these developments.

Turkey and Egypt are the two major actors in the region, sharing not only a common geography, but also a common history and similar cultural values. All throughout history, no matter by whom and how these countries were ruled, they bore the responsibility to keep the peace and stability in the region. Smaller countries in the region look at these countries always with some respect and most of the time with confidence. With sober-minded policies, our two countries felt these responsibilities and duties in the region, and in case if one of us faced any troubles, the other came with a helping hand. A bright example of this was just a few years ago during President Mubarak's shuttle diplomacy between Turkey and Syria. We are grateful for his efforts, which we appreciate today even more, by the Turkish-Syrian rapprochement.

Turkey and Egypt have a special place and responsibilities not only in the Middle East but also in the security of Eastern Mediterranean. Egypt is strategically located in a very sensitive geopolitical environment where it controls the Northern-Eastern edge of the African continent, the

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*** Chairman of the Center for Strategic Research (SAM)**

sea connection between Red Sea and the Mediterranean by Suez, the southern coasts of the Eastern Mediterranean area, the Nile valley and strategic Sinai Peninsula, which is a part of the extremely sensitive Middle East nerve point. So we can see why Egypt is so important and it should be the most responsible actor in the Middle East chessboard.

On the other hand, you can see the other important country of the region, Turkey as a bridge between the continents of Europe and Asia surrounded by 9000 km long coastline in three seas, as a Mediterranean power controlling the northern shores of the Eastern Mediterranean and holding the main gates of the Black Sea by the two straits, acting at the same time as a Balkan power, as well as a Caucasus power.

If such two major powers in the region properly cooperate, I think no other power can easily break the peace and stability in the region for the good and benefit of all. Egypt and Turkey should work hand in hand to establish sustainable, durable, just peace and stability in this critical geography.

For these opening remarks, I prefer to reserve my share of contributions in the discussion of themes later. During the analysis of the agenda items, I would like to keep my opening remarks as short as possible.

Now I would like to introduce to you the members of my team, starting with Prof. Dr. Sema Kalaycıoğlu from Işık University in Istanbul, who is a Professor of Economics. She will contribute in the economic aspects of our agenda. She is familiar and a very good friend of Egypt and she says each time she comes to Egypt she likes it more than her previous visit.

Second in my team is Assoc. Prof. Meliha Altunışık from the Middle East Technical University. Ms. Altunışık is, in fact, a Middle East affairs expert. She has studied some Arabic also. I do not know how fluent she is, but she is definitely an expert of Arab affairs. In Ankara, she works in close cooperation with our Center for Strategic Research. She will also make statements.

Assoc. Prof. Çağrı Erhan is a member of the Faculty of Political Sciences, Ankara University. Just like Prof. Kalaycıoğlu, he was in the team during our first visit to Egypt. So this is his second visit in our

strategic team. Mr. Erhan is one of the forthcoming experts in Turkey in the field of security studies, NATO and other military strategics, proliferation as well as armament questions and strategic security studies. He will also have two interventions.

Mr. Haydar Günver is our Director of Department in the Center for Strategic Research. He has been our former Consul–General in Alexandria, therefore he is familiar with Egypt and he also is in love with Egypt. Therefore, I requested him to make the coordination of our visit to Egypt. By the way, he is the son of a very respected and prominent Turkish diplomat and Ambassador Semih Günver, who also worked in Egypt.

Last but not least, our young colleague Torgay Doğan is a research assistant in our Center for Strategic Research. He has joined us almost a year ago as an intern and now he has recently, in fact only last week, taken the first part of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs entry examination. In a month or so we shall know if he will be a career diplomat. He is a graduate of the Faculty of Political Sciences, Ankara University.

It is difficult to talk about oneself, so I leave it to your guess. I would like to thank you for your attention and wish to all success in our discussions.

CHAPTER ONE

Developments in the Middle East after 9/11: A Multi-Aspect Approach: Military, Economic, Cultural and Political

Developments in the Middle East after 9-11: A multi approach situation: Military, Economic, Cultural and Political – A Turkish Perspective*

Ambassador. Murat Bilhan**

To put the facts on the ground, I have to say that our region is changing so quickly, thus international developments are taking place so accelerated that I have to make my statement without looking at my previously prepared paper. I will be as brief as possible in expressing my modest knowledge and ideas.

I am not a historian, but I find history in the field of personal interest and I have been reading history for pleasure. So I know the Ottoman history within the context of what I have already read. In this respect we have a common history in this region from the 14th, 15th till maybe the 19th century. We have a common history also in Africa and in the Red Sea.

In the historical documents which we have, if I can correctly remember, the Ottoman rule over the territories under its jurisdiction it was just, equitable and based on equal rights of all nationalities and religion. The feeling of justice as well as the state mechanisms employed during those times were so different from the later colonial period in these lands taken over from Turkey by colonialists. Those colonial powers dictated their terms to the people and they were imposing unlike the way the Ottomans ruled, because the Ottomans and subject nations were sharing the same political, economic, social and cultural values. The Ottomans, sharing the same religion with the Arabs, have been the symbol of justice and equity in the administration of its territories including Arab territories.

On the contrary to what was said, the existence of the Ottomans in the Arab territories has delayed the inclusion of colonialism into this region. So, I don't know how such relationship could be objected by the Arab people.

*** Transcript of the presentation given by Ambassador. Murat Bilhan**

**** Chairman of the Center for Strategic Research (SAM)**

Anyway in the history of Egypt, it was not only the Ottomans who ruled Egypt. Other Turkish dynasties have also ruled Egypt in earlier times. By the way, I don't want to get too involved in historical events, since these are controversial and there are many other issues that we have to deal with today.

Among them there is another topic I should like to underline which is our relations with Israel. This is another factor. With Israel we have correct, clear and transparent relations such as we have exactly with Egypt. Egypt also has very transparent diplomatic relations with Israel at ambassadorial level. Egypt is outstanding country among the Arab states why its relationship with Israel is considered more important than other Arab states.

Therefore I believe that they should not think that Turkey is playing a different role. And on the other hand, Turkey has been saying to the Jewish people that we should differentiate between anti-Semitism and anti-Zionism. Turkish people are not anti-Semitist but anti-Zionist. Because anti-Semitism would mean a racial and religious hatred and it is wrong by any standard. But Zionism is an expansionist and racial ideology, which everyone including the Jews should avoid. The expansionist policy of any country in this region- including of course Israel- is not acceptable by Turkish standards and Turkish foreign policy statements clearly mention that Israel is expected and desired to return the territories it has occupied. One of the first countries that recognized Palestine as an independent state was Turkey. There is an Ambassador of Palestine in Turkey who is also the Dean of the diplomatic corps in Ankara.

Therefore, Turkey, as Egypt does, pursues open and balanced policy towards Israel since the foundation of the Israeli state and Turkish people have good relations with Jewish people throughout history. In fact, the Turkish-Israeli relations are not much different from the relations between Israel and Egypt. Turkey has kept a balance policy on Palestinian-Israeli conflict and nobody can blame Turkey in this regard.

Concerning Turkish policy vis-à-vis the occupied Arab lands and persecuted Arab people is made crystal clear by public and official statements.

Let me lead you back to our subject. The attacks of 9/11 have changed the world as well as the Middle East. After 9/11 several parameters of international politics have changed and that coincide with the global change. But globally thinking, certain major powers shaping the world, not only America, but also the European Union, China, India and Russia have a common denominator in looking at this geographical region, which is referred to as the Greater Middle East. These powers are interested in this region on the one hand for its energy resources which constitutes more than 73% of world energy resources and on the other hand as a region as the source of all evil, like for instance terrorism, religious fundamentalism, international criminal activities, organized crime, proliferation of WMD, illegal migration etc. This oil-rich region extends from the southern parts of Russia to the Persian Gulf north-south bond axis, which contains the best qualified resources including the Iraqi oil. This region attracts the eyes of the outsiders, including America. And of course it is in their interest to secure these resources and they would like them to be transferred to the consumer markets in the west. So, for the west the Middle East area is a very important geo-strategical area.

The region called "the Greater Middle East" is now seen as the cradle of terrorism and all sorts of evil, and defined as "the evil crescent" or "the source of evil

There was once a meeting in one of the American think tanks in the region and they talked about the evil triangle and based their considerations on the fundamentalist, religious exercises from that region and they say this region has a big resistance not to change. Now, the American concept is changed by almost all American think tanks no matter whom they serve, some of them serve the Pentagon, some neo-liberals, some of them serve the White House, some serve the Republicans and some the Democrats and some of them the State Department. They all agree that this region should be changed and be transformed into something that could fit in what they themselves would like to have.

In this respect, first we should define this main geographical region today. What are the limits of that region? There are, however, different views on this geography. According to some, "the Greater Middle East" includes the South Caucasus, Iran, Pakistan and Afghanistan, in addition to the classical Middle East. To others, it

comprises of the whole area of the Islamic world, including Central Asia and Southeast Asian countries such as Malaysia and Indonesia. No matter with the differences on the geography; the common denominator appears to be "Islam"

Another question would be what is wrong with Islam? Our Prime Minister stated – after the statement of PM Mahatir Mohamed of Malaysia in the IOC meeting- that the problem is not with Islam but with the Muslims and I personally agree with him.

It is a fact that all the major powers agree on the necessity of change and transformation in this specific region. All actors in the region believe in the need of change of the region. Russia, India and China blame the region regarding their problems in Chechnya, Kashmir and Xinjiang respectively. Russians, Indians and Chinese have different interests in the region, although they have competing interests they agree on this very fact. This means almost all the world is desirous to change this area and transform it to fit into certain standards. The question is: whether the people in the states of this region are in agreement with the roles to be given to them or should they be transformed by their own internal dynamics rather than external dynamics. Therefore what kind of role do we assign to ourselves? The key to the answer to that question in fact will determine the future of this region.

The EU has simultaneously announced the concept of a wider Europe. What do a wider Europe and a greater Middle East concepts mean? Do they converge with each other or diverge?

Concerning Europe it is a little different. Europeans starting by the enlargement of the European Union began to argue about a multi-speed Europe because not all countries have the same level of economic political and social development. Therefore they would like to have different speed for each of these countries in the decision-making core of the EU. In that respect they would like to assign certain roles and have some links of cooperation with the non-EU Europeans. The core of the EU decision makers would like to see a Europe bound and united by the EU but outside the core, they would like to establish and maintain special bonds to other European countries which are aspiring members, while depriving them from sharing the decision-making process. They would like to keep them out since it is not possible to digest all these European

countries in the EU. Therefore a country like Ukraine would be assisted by the EU but not given a chance in the long run in the decision making process of the European Union. Hence a larger European is emanating from these thoughts, such that the European geography assigned for Wider Europe includes non- EU countries such as the Black sea, Balkan countries and those who opted to stay out of the EU such as Norway and Switzerland.

Turkey is considered to be a bridge between these two geographies since it has a foothold in Asia, Middle East and Europe. Therefore they do not know what to do with Turkey. It is a large country so it can't be easily absorbed by the EU. Therefore it should be kept at bay, but given incentives to stay within the sphere of influence of Europe but sharing the Decision making is too early for Turkey is different from Ukraine, Moldavia and others because it is more advanced.

An important point is that, this specific geography which I described that it corresponds with Islamic geography, covers the entire Arab world without exclusion, which means that the Arab world is the focal point in describing that geography and the Arabs are the focal point in the Middle East

Therefore the question is: who are 'the other'? And 'the other' is against whom? These are question marks that are to be elaborated on.

According to the UNDP Arab Human Development Report, I presume that there are certain facts, which are undeniable and thought-provoking. The whole GNP of the Arab world is equal to Spain's GNP and that includes the Arab petroleum producing countries. This is unacceptable by any standards and this shows that we have a problem here.

Another fact is that the annual number of publications in the Arab world is equal to only one month's of the number of publications in Greece. This again is very important to deal with and a solution should be found.

This region should transform itself not with external dynamics but rather with internal dynamics. But the question is do we have this potential? Yes we do. According to a meeting of NGO's in Alexandria Library on the 3rd-4th of March 2004 produced a very interesting report

that is a proof of that. There is a big potential in the Arabic and eastern world for change by internal dynamics exists and we should vitalize this role by peaceful external incentives, which also should not be ruled out.

The Middle East After 9/11: Determinants and Issues:
The Impact on Egyptian-Turkish respective roles and relations

Dr. Nadia Mostafa*

Introduction:

The term "Middle East" allows the inclusion of Turkey and other non-Arab countries- in addition to the Arab countries -into a wider system of regional interactions than that of the Arab system.

The "Middle East" terminology started gaining increased attention than it did a century ago. Now, it is acquiring renewed attention after facing several setbacks along the 20th century.

With the fall of the Ottoman Empire, the emergence of Ataturk's new regime in Turkey and Arab nationalism, conflicts between the Turks and the Arabs took place. A third party, The European Colonialism- under the auspices of mandate- was the beneficiary, while a complete blockage damaged Arab- Turkish relations.

During the cold war, the gap between the Turkish and the Arab side was deepened with the creation of the state of Israel and the radical Arab nationalists' orientations and policies.

The last quarter of the 20th century witnessed the reconstruction of bridges and a relaxation in the Turkish- Arab relations. Since 1991 a Turkish initiative towards the Arab world –which was met by a positive Arab response- started and deepened relations. The end of the cold war, the consequences of the Gulf crisis and the launching of the Madrid peace process affected the relations between both sides.

By the end of the 20th century and in the light of the experiences of the evolution of Arab- Turkish relations, we can conclude that foreign influences and interventions that had consequently reshaped the regional

* **Director of the CPRS**

context have had a major impact on Arab- Turkish relations and on the reciprocal perspectives and positions towards regional issues.

The Ottoman Empire history- whether the periods of strength or weakness- provided us with memories of historical experiences which proved that foreign interventions had negatively affected the Arab-Turkish relations.

Our actual interest in the "Middle East after 9/11" is an interest in a new critical period where the region is facing a serious reshaping process imposed by the American Power and its Allies. Hence, major foreign intervention is radically affecting regional balances and internal systems. So, the launching of the American initiative for a "Greater Middle East" is considered, after the occupation of Afghanistan and Iraq, as the third step in applying the global American strategy after 9/11.

Accordingly, determining the nature of the Egyptian and the Turkish positions towards such a Middle Eastern context that the US is planning for, will be the main concern of this paper.

As a result of the ups and downs in Arab-Turkish relations -during the second half of the 20th century- the evolution of these relations was mainly determined by both: The Turkish role in American strategy and the Turkish orientation towards the west on one side and Turkish- Israeli relations on the other side. The evolution of these relations clearly showed that Turkish policy towards the Middle East considers relations with Arab world as a tool and not as a goal in itself. While relations with the USA, the integration in Europe and the alliance with Israel are considered as independent variables, relations with Arabs are the dependant ones.

Comprehending the Turkish role towards the current Middle Eastern reshaping process since 9/11 requires the following:

1- Studying the international, regional determinants that surround both Egypt and Turkey as well as the internal ones.

2- Determining the areas and issues of Egyptian-Turkish interaction that influence their respective positions in the American strategy towards the Middle East.

3- Studying how, in Egypt, we perceive the Turkish general orientations and positions towards reshaping the Middle East after 9/11.

All these points pave the way for the coming papers to discuss more specific issues covered by the sessions of the colloquial.

In other words, my presentation aims to discuss the following problematic: The relationship between the geo-strategic aspects that enhances the possibility of conflicts, and the common historical and cultural bonds (civilizational neighborhood) that enhance the possibility of cooperation between Egypt and Turkey.

Although Turkey and its Arab neighbors belong to one civilization, they experienced -all along their extended historical relations- various types of conflictive and cooperative interactions. So several questions were always raised: Is Turkey a national neighborhood threatening Arab interests? or should civilizational neighborhood and common vital interests bound The Turkish and Arab people? Is the role of Egypt and Turkey competitive, complementary or conflictive ? What are the conditions that enhance the possibility of cooperation or conflict? Do foreign influences or the internal ones enhance the possibility of conflict?

First: Determinants of reshaping Arab System after 9-11

1- External Determinants : Global American Strategy (War Against Terrorism):

Since the cold war the American strategy towards the Middle East was constantly influenced by its global strategy. The situation of both Egypt and Turkey was always linked to the evolution of these two strategies.

The 9/11 events did not give birth to a new global American strategy. They, very much indeed, put it in light. An American strategic thought was already established and planned just before the 9/11 events. These events later paved the way for executing its strategy regionally and globally. US administration had succeeded to use the war on terrorism as a justification for its policies and the establishment of an international coalition that it led vigorously since 9/11.

The main aspects, motives and policies of the global American strategy can be summarized as follows:

a) Fighting terrorism –according to the American definition and perception of terrorism – is the main security goal. Although Military force is the major tool for fighting terrorism, other policies, i.e economic, diplomatic and cultural policies should support the use of force. The American strategy is based on preventive measures, coalition with friends according to the famous motto: "Who is not with us is against us".

b) Fighting terrorism, which is threatening to destroy the Western civilization, does not constitute the only motive that directs the global American strategy after 9/11. Other motives could be cited: tightening control on Petroleum resources stretched from Central Asia to the Gulf region, reshaping regional balances in a way that impose the American hegemony all around the world, preventing the emerging big power (China), the one that is reconstructing its capabilities (Russia), and the one that completes the needed bases for an effective and independent international role(European Union), preventing them from competing with American hegemony, and finally reshaping the Muslim World according to the American alliance with the Zionist interests.

The previous aspects shows to what extent military and economic aspects are intermingled with cultural ones. So the American policies towards the Middle East are a combination of both military force as well as educational and cultural policies to impose change in education, culture, information and internal political system.

The Egyptian and Arab perspectives of these aspects and their impact on the reshaping of Arab regional system agreed that American strategy aims to realize the following objects:

- Protecting petroleum resources that necessitates controlling the gulf area.
- Protecting not just Israeli security but also Israeli regional hegemony, to an extent that can sacrifice the peace process and a just settlement for the Palestinian issue.

- Reshaping the regional alliances in a way that permits to build new alliances with Iraq, Kuwait and Qatar at the expenses of its alliances with Egypt and Saudi Arabia.
- Breaking the remaining Arab resistance centers by tightening the political and economic blockade (Syria), or using the minorities card (Sudan and Syria), or the accusation of supporting terrorism and having massive destruction weapons(Syria, Libya).

Since 9/11, the American presence was consolidated deeply by its direct and extensive military presence. Especially after the war on Iraq, the US seems to be no longer in need of its allies, friends or clients. On the other hand, the cultural and societal aspects of American intervention was no more separated from the military and economic ones. They are indeed very much interlinked. The American perspective is considering that the reshaping of the region could not be achieved only through direct military means but also through societal and cultural changes. The relations between Islam, society and the State are in the core of these needed changes.

On the other hand, according to the status of big powers in the international system and their position towards the American hegemony practices, we can clearly observe that these big powers were really trying to minimize the negative impacts of this hegemony on their national interests. Thus, their policies towards the Arab region were only a means to achieve this.

Therefore, The Middle East since 9/11 entered a critical moment where foreign intervention had reached its peak. The linkages between the external and the internal became intense and deep. The external was internalized and vice versa and the regional became international, while foreign interventions became quite clear, solving regional issues became the responsibility of foreign powers. The high degree of disorder and weakness at the regional and internal level had enormously facilitated the American mission, that brought the Middle East in the core of its global strategy after 9/11.

2- Internal Determinants:

Both Egypt and Turkey share the following determinants:

a) Type of relations between religion, states and society:

Turkey is a secular republic, a democratic system with a distinct role that the military plays for defending secularism. The political societal (socio-political) developments show three essential crises:

- Identity crisis (i.e., the reorientation towards East or West, Secularism or Islam).
- The polarization secularism/Islamism with the emergence of powerful Islamic trends.
- Political Instability because of the fragility of coalition governments.

Egypt, according to the constitution, is an Islamic state. The Egyptian political system is a restricted semi-democratic where true rotation of power does not exist. While the Turkish secularism restrictions affected the Turkish Islamism, the Egyptian system after liquidating by force the Gama'at is still refusing to recognize the legitimacy of the extended moderate Islamic trend.

We can certainly notice the differences in nature and type of both the actual Islamic Party that is in power in Turkey (Justice and Development Party) and the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, that is playing its role as an opposition force which does not yet enjoy legitimacy.

b) The deteriorating economic situation.:

Both states are suffering –in different degrees- critical economic crises. This is reflected clearly in unemployment, inflation, decreased rate of growth and deterioration of the living standard. Theses crises affected –deeply- the foreign policy orientation of both states, because they use it mainly for serving the purpose of development. Hence, a pragmatic consideration is playing a distinct role, as a way to overcome foreign restrictions.

c) Regional role orientation:

Both states have always been aiming at playing a regional role. Alongside with Iran, they present three main centers in the Islamic world. Their respective regional roles have always intersected in a conflictual or competitive way. The orientation of both states toward the Arab region have been fluctuating, influenced by US relations.

3- Regional determinants:

a) The role of Israel:

The role of Israel accelerated constantly in the actual American strategy after 9/11. The war on Afghanistan, the occupation of Iraq and the critical aggression against the Palestinian people have clearly reflected to what extent the American-Israeli alliance is fortified and consolidated. It is now clear how this alliance will affect new regional balances. In other words, Israel, the terrorist state, has deeply benefited from the so-called global war against terrorism that the USA led since 9/11. While the Egyptian-Israeli relations are confronting problems, because of the Israeli aggression on the West Bank and Gaza Strip, the Turkish-Israeli relations were enhancing.

b) Other regional determinants:

- The collapse of the peaceful settlement process and the joint Israeli-American efforts to liquidate the Palestinian issue and imposed, by force, an Israeli-American settlement. While, on the other hand, an impressive Palestinian resistance is still existing using various tools.

- The actual pressure on Syria.

- The future of Gulf security and regional alliances under the American military occupation.

- The fate of the new Iraqi state, its territorial integrity, its foreign policy orientation

- The consequences of the security problem in the Asian neighborhood.

- The actual American pressure on Iran and post-Taliban Afghanistan.

- The challenges that face the Pakistani role in the American strategy.

- Regional issues such as the mass destruction weapons, water distribution, minority rights (especially the Kurdish case) and the role of the politicized Islamic movements.

Second: Egypt and Turkey's position in the process of reshaping of Middle East: Common aspects, different orientations and suggested options

Mainly, this position faces the challenges imposed by American interventions since 9/11. These interventions led the two countries' options to a critical phase. These options will affect deeply, the respective images of the two sides. Turkey has been seen, from some Egyptian perspectives, as follows:

- A western not an Islamic country, or an Islamic country that faced an identity crisis and because of the deep obstacles that faced its integration in Europe, Turkey will reorient its foreign policy.
- A source of threat to Arab interests and security or a possible ally because of the common Islamic heritage and civilization.
- A model for a modern secularism that presents a bridge between the western secularism and Islam, or a model of " moderate political Islam", the so called " Islamic Secularism" .

To clarify how the American intervention is shaping the two countries' positions, we have to discuss six main issues that the papers of the colloquial will treat: Internal political and societal change, the regional security arrangements and the Middle Eastern economic arrangements after the occupation of Iraq, the regional alliances in the post Iraq occupation era, the collapsed peace process and Israeli- Turkish alliance, and the cultural aspects i.e. the dialogue or the clash of cultures and civilizations.

I will only approach two issues as clarifying examples.

1. **Internal Change and Its External Extensions:**

The political and societal change issue has become an external problem, because both Egypt and Turkey - for a different reasons- are running the actual process of internal change while looking at foreign responses and pressures that American strategy is exercising.

On the Turkish side, we noticed the following: the trial to present an image of a moderate Islam that the USA can accept, the improvement of human rights situation, constitutional amendments that insure the

respect of these rights, and dealing with the problems of identity without evoking the rage of the west or cuttings the links between the ruling Islamic Party (Justice and Development) and its electoral and societal roots.

The actual internal developments in Turkey were run under the stress of both: the future of Turkey's membership in the EU, and the possible prevention of confrontation with the actual American hegemony that could trigger critical risks and threats to national interests.

The modern political Turkish experiences (since the ottoman reforms beginning at the end of the 18th century until the Ataturk radical changes) highlighted the enormous impact of the foreign factors. There is no doubt that the actual situation after 9/11 imposed more restraints, especially on a party with Islamic orientation. It is important to study the nature of the party's orientation, program, how it had won the elections with a remarkably majority, how it is running the paradoxes of the relations with USA and its position towards the most critical issues in the region such as Iraq and Palestine. The study of the "Justice and Development" party's experience will shed light on how some political Islam forces can overcome the restrictions imposed by both internal regimes and US policies.

As long as Egypt presents another model for the relation between Islam, state and society, the actual situation imposes different type of foreign stress on its experience of internal change. A large Islamic trend is still considered illegitimate. Although it is now sharing with the other political trends in Egypt some major requirements of political change.

The role of the military in Egypt is no more comparable with before. In Both Egypt and Turkey the societal mobilization movement is reflecting a renewal role of Islam in societal and educational civil society activities. While educational and cultural changes that USA seeks to impose, as a mean of fighting the roots of terrorism, were considered by these movements as a non accepted foreign intervention, the different political and societal trends in Egypt agreed that the religious discourse needs to be renewed. However, the scope and content of this renewed process were not agreed upon.

In other words, the future of internal changes in Egypt and Turkey will affect the landscape of balances between Middle Eastern political

forces(secular, Islamist), as well as the nature of democracy that the political systems will adopt. This landscape will affect foreign policies orientations and the type of regional alliances that the two countries adopt.

2. **Foreign policy circles: The impact of American global strategy, the significance for internal change and regional security arrangements:**

Egypt and Turkey have special relations with USA, even though they differ in motives, degree and nature. On other hand, the foreign policy circles of both Egypt and Turkey are various. The priority of them had changed according to the phase that their national foreign policy goes through. On the Turkish side, the following circles are present: European, Atlantic, Middle Eastern, Central Asia, Balkan, and Islamic. On the Egyptian side, we site the following circles: Arab, African, Mediterranean, Middle Eastern, Islamic and South.

Both Egyptian and Turkish society faces the problematic of Identity that had evoked tensions between elites belonging to different trends of thoughts. This problematic had hardened the choices of foreign policies positions.

At the Actual stage of Middle East reshaping under the impact of American global strategy, the urgency of these circles have changed. Hence the Middle East circle priority jumped to the top at the expenses of other, especially the Arab one (in the case of Egypt), and the European one (in the case of Turkey).

The Middle East arrangements, especially tightening the relations with Israel and keeping a balanced alliance with USA in front of Arab issues, would be the price that Turkey will pay in return for accomplishing benefits at the European circle level. But, on other hand, to what extent the internal political situation , having the Justice and development party in power, will affect Turkish orientation towards more or less alliance with both Israel and USA at the expense of a balanced relation with the Arabs and the Muslim World?

On the other side, the Egyptian position on the American strategy towards Middle East, will deeply affect the Egyptian orientation towards Arab and Islamic circle, as well as towards European- Mediterranean one.

The conflict between Middle Eastern system under US and Israeli hegemony and European Mediterranean partnership under EU leadership, will be renewed in a way that will give rise to the Turkish and Israeli role at the expenses of the Egyptian role and the efforts done to rebuild and renew the Arab regional system.

The military security arrangements, the economic ones as well as the fate of the peace process and the process of reconstructing Iraq, present main issues that will test all the above-mentioned analysis. The papers of the colloquial will treat these issues.

Finally:

After reviewing the main external, regional and internal determinants, and after evoking questions concerning the main issues that the reshaping process of the Arab system will confront, multiple questions could be summarized as follows and addressed by the colloquial:

Does the actual state in the Middle East enhance the possibility of more or less coordination between Egypt and Turkey? Does this coordination help in making balance in front of foreign American intervention and reducing its negative impact on the national interests of the two countries, especially Egypt?. Do the external determinants, especially American global strategy, impose restraints and pressures on Egypt more than it imposes on Turkey, the traditional ally with USA and Israel? Would these determinants prevent fruitful coordination to accomplish Egyptian and Turkish respective interests?

If the external restraints and pressures that Turkey faced are not as critical as the ones that Egypt confronted, hence, does the Egyptian coordination with Turkey increase the Egyptian possibilities of action or not? If Egypt can realize direct economic benefit through its relations with Turkey, can it influence the Turkish positions towards major Arab issues, such the Iraq after occupation, the Palestinian issue, the siege on Syria, and the Gulf security?. In other words: if the existing Egyptian role is already restrained, can the coordination with Turkey help reactivate it? and in what direction?

On the other side, Turkey's direct interests (economic ones) with Arabs are not threatened, hence it does not feel the urgency for revising

its policies towards some Arab issues , especially on the water issue or tightening its alliance with Israel while the later continues its aggression on the Palestinian people. In other words: if realistic considerations impose compromises on Egypt's position towards Turkeys justification of its policies towards Israel, the Kurdish problem, etc, but we notice that some Egyptian non-formal forces perceive Turkish policies as a source of threat. So, the Turkish side has to revise its policies in order to achieve more coordination with Egypt (putting some pressure on Israel, in spite of selling her water).

Of course it is expected that the coming sessions of the colloquial will discuss Egyptian perspectives that explain what does Egypt want from Turkey and why?

These perspectives will testify a comprehensive statement that can be summarized as follows: *Turkey is a major given that Egyptian policies can never drop or neglect.* Although some Arab nationalists that perceived Turkey as a threat to Arab national security, Egypt can either leave Turkey to Israel, or consider it a second enemy that serves Western interests in the region. Although some Egyptian perspectives admit that there are some determinants of Turkish policies that can not be overcomed, i.e. the role of the military that enhances special relations with Israel and the alliance with the west, these perspectives admit on the other hand that there are areas of common interests that could be promoted.

Egypt should not be satisfied with only promoting economic and cultural ties with Turkey, in spite of the existing regional tensions and the differences between Egyptian and Turkish policies towards some main issues. Egypt should not just play the role of conflict mediation between Turkey and some Arab countries such as Syria. So, instead of taking a reactive positions towards Turkish- Western- Israeli initiatives, Egypt should also promote its initiatives based on a strategic vision of its relations with Turkey. Such vision will make Egypt and Arabs a goal for Turkish policies and not just a secondary tool.

The balanced clever diplomacy that Turkey had adopted before and after the occupation of Iraq assured that we should discover the common grounds and areas of interests. We should not leave the scene for Israel to forge more vital relations with Turkey at the expense of Arab

relations. We should not retreat in front of extremist secular forces that dropped historical and cultural ties that bounded Egypt and Turkey for a long time. We should be convinced that nationalist differences do not create by themselves conflicts. These conflicts are rather the outputs of political calculations of benefits and costs. Egypt should work hard for consolidating the benefits from Turkey as long as Turkey is convinced that her interests with the Arabs are not less important than with Israel and the West.

Resources

First: The Center for Political Research and Studies publications(In Arabic):

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2. Dr. Galal Abd Allah Moawad: Reality and future overview of Egyptian- Turkish relation, in Dr. Abd El Monam El Mashat (editor) the regional role of Egypt in Middle East, 1995.
3. Dr. Galal Abd Allah Moawad , the evolution of the Turkish-Israeli relations in the Nineties, political research series, issue (107), June 1996.
4. Dr. Ahmed Abd El Haleem, Egypt and turkey and the Arab-Israeli conflict, in Dr. Nazly Moawad (editor) Egyptian relation with its geo neighboring countries in the ninties,1999.
5. Dr. Mohamed Harb, Egypt and turkey and the Kurdish and terrorism, Ibid.
6. Dr. Haithem Al Kelany, Egypt and Turkey and Borders issue, Ibid.
7. Dr. Galal Abd Allah Moawad, Egyptian- Turkish economic relations, Ibid.
8. Mr. Wagdy Kedeek, Egyptian-Turkish cultural relations, Ibid.
9. Dr. Galal Abd Allah Moawad, Egyptian -Turkish relations ,2001.
10. Dr. Pakinam El Sharkawy, Turkey in the Egyptian political thought, in Dr. Ola Abou Zeid (editor) in modern Egyptian political thought, 2003.
11. Dr. Pakinam El Sharkawy, The Turkish-Iranian scene and the Iraqi crisis, in Dr. Hassan Nafaa , Dr. Nadia Moustafa (editors) Aggression on Iraq: a crisis map and the future of the Ummah (in collaboration with political science department), 2003.

12. Dr. Mohamed El Said Edrees, future coordination and consultation with Iran and Turkey, in Dr. Amr Drag , Dr. Nadia Mostafa(editors) Egypt and the Nation : What after the aggression on Iraq (In collaboration with teaching form members club in Cairo University), 2003.

13. Dr. Pakinam El Sharkawy, Egyptian regional role: Iranian and Turkish view, in Dr. Nadia Moustafa, Dr. Zainab Abd El Azeem (editors) The Egyptian regional role in facing the current challenge (2000-2003), 2003.

Second: Other publications (In Arabic):-

1. Mr. Ahmed Turk, Abd Allah Gad, Dr. Ibrahim ELBayoumi: The inner internal transformations in Turkey and their regional and international reflections in, My Ummah in the world (1998), Yearbook of the islamic world, Center of Civilization for Political Studies , Cairo, 1999.
2. Dr. Hassanien Tawfek Ibrahim: The Egyptian- Turkish and Iranian trilateral relations: specifications, roads and future, in Ummah in the world (1999), the Yearbook of Islamic world, Center of Civilization for Political Studies, Cairo, 2000.
3. Dr. Zainab Abd Elazeem, The American global strategy and the continuation of the war on terrorism in, Ummah in the world (2001-2002) Yearbook of Islamic world, Center of Civilization for Political Studies, Cairo, 2003 (part II).
4. Dr. Pakinam ElSharkawy : Iran and Turkey and the repercussions of the world crisis, in My Nation in the world (2001-2002), Yearbook of Islamic world, Center of civilization for political studies, Cairo, 2003 (part II).
5. Dr. Pakinam ELSharkawy: Turkey and Iraq, constants and variables in the Turkish policy towards Iraq, in Ahmed Ibrahim Mahmoud (Editor) The Gulf and the Iraqi issue, from Kuwait invasion to Iraqi occupation (1990-2003) , Center for political and strategic studies in Ahram, 2003.

COMMENTATOR:

Dr. Samaan Boutros Fargalla*

Ladies and gentlemen, I am really honored to preside the first session of this seminar, which is designed to draw the general framework of all the following sessions.

I am pleased and honored to welcome his Excellency Ambassador. Murat Bilhan who has presented the Turkish perception on the developments in the Middle East after 9/11. He is actually the most qualified person to present this perception.

I am also pleased and honored to welcome my colleague Dr. Nadia Mostafa, Professor of International Relations and the Director of the Center for Political Research and Studies in this Faculty.

I hope that this general framework will invite you to pose questions and comments since this is a difficult situation due to the existence of different perceptions.

Although differences exist, there are common grounds between them which could later on lead to the enhancement of cooperation between the two countries either on the political level or on the intellectual basis as we are doing right now.

Concerning Ambassador. Murat Bilhan's presentation it raised many issues which I would like to comment on:

First, I think it is not wise to leave behind historical resentments between governments and peoples. It is desirable to find a common ground for understanding; which is an essential condition in order to develop cooperation between governments and people in the future.

***Transcript of the comment given by Dr. Samaan Boutros Faragallah- Professor of Political Science- FEPS – Cairo University**

There is- now-a-days- some basic resentments about the attitude of Turkey vis-à-vis some countries in the area such as Israel, Syria and Iraq. These issues will constitute the core of this seminar later on.

The second point I would like to mention concerns the issue of terrorism which has been identified by the west with the Middle East. I would like to ask; what is the perception of Turkey on this issue? What is the Turkish evaluation of the Israeli's state terrorism against the Palestinian people who have been faced with the most violent act of state terrorism that has been topped by the brutal assassination of Sheikh Ahmed Yassin.

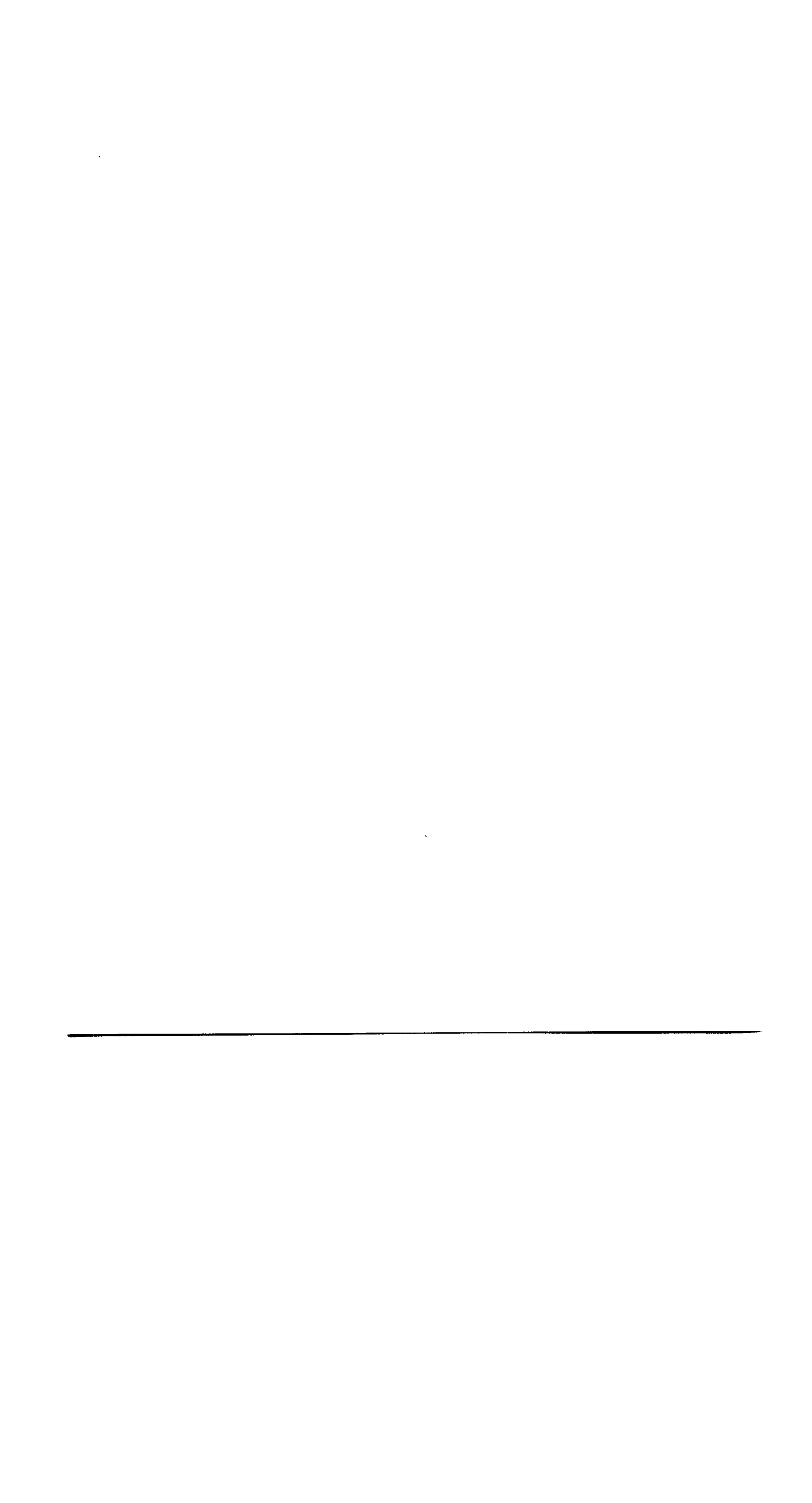
The third issue you raised is the transformation in this era. My question is: Will this transformation be achieved through internal dynamics or forced by external intervention?

The fourth issue is about the wider Europe and the greater Middle East. Turkey aspired to be part of the Wider Europe and at the same time it is part of the Middle East. My question is: Would this situation enable Turkey to be a bridge between Europe and the Middle East? I would like more details on these two concepts and Turkey's position towards them.

Concerning Dr. Nadia Mostafa's presentation, she indeed gave an elaborative and deep piece of academic thinking, and I underline academic thinking because all of us are either pure academics or even those who are part of the political systems in their states are presenting their personal perceptions thus they are not speaking as politicians but as thinkers in order to come up with a fruitful and deep thinking of the current developments in the Middle East and also to identify the external, internal and regional determinants of the changing Middle East.

I consider the second part of her paper the most valuable in which she tried to identify the common aspect of Egyptian and Turkish positions, the different orientations and more important suggesting some options that are opening up to both countries in order to cooperate in the future.

Dr. Nadia Mostafa elaborated on the issue that both states present two different models of the relationship between Islam, state and society. These two different models do not contradict each others. They are different due to diverse security interests and perspectives, but the question posed here is; which of the two models is more suitable for the region? Is there a common ground between these two models? Or do we need another model? Which could be more elaborate and more suitable to the area in changing contexts?



DISCUSSIONS

Ambassador. Nabil Badr-
Ex Ambassador- Egyptian Ministry of Foreign Affairs

I think that it is very important- especially in this opening session- to try to define the framework of discussion. I agree with the logical statement that Dr. Nadia Mostafa has just mentioned since we are talking about two important regional countries that enjoy good relations based on free discussions which is actually an addition to their national security and adds a depth to their external relations and gives extra weight to their political status.

Ambassador. Murat Bilhan knows that the United States benefits a lot from its relationship with Egypt. Now this is a superpower- or the only superpower- and many American analysis mention that Egypt has its weight in the Middle East, also in Africa its role is strategically and politically important.

I admit that the Islamic world needs a lot of reform since we lack reform and reformers. We also lack people who can address changes. Although there are attempts for reform, what is taking place in Turkey and Egypt is not sufficient.

In Turkey you are secular, but at the same time you are interested in the Islamic party. So I see that there is a problem in Turkey in defining its identity. As for Egypt there is a lot that we need to change. We need real democracy and a serious political life.

The role of Egypt cannot be underestimated in the external world because strategically and historically it has presented a moderate model. So we have a better chance.

The Greater Middle East initiative aims at the models of the Islamic world and I suggest that this issue will need more elaboration.

Dr. Sema Kalaycioglu- Professor- Isik University

Thank you Mr. Chairman, I am part of the Turkish delegation and I appreciate your organization of this symposium. As Ambassador. Murat

Bilhan mentioned when he was kindly introducing me, that everytime I visit Egypt I enjoy your beautiful country more and more.

I would like Dr. Nadia Mostafa to clarify what kind of information or data she has on Turkish-Israeli relations. According to my knowledge- and I am a close follower of Turkey's economic relations especially vis-à-vis our regional neighbors- Turkey has economic relations with Israel which is not necessarily a strategic one but increases and decreases from time to time.

Ofcourse we have strong economic relationship with Israel because of the free trade agreement that we signed since 1996 just after Israel signed the Customs Union Treaty with the EU. Till now we could not sign a free trade agreement with Egypt. Yet on the level of economic relations with Israeli there are remaining frictions. For instance we made a deal to sell water to Israel from our river. They bared all investments and we bore the costs but at the end they changed their minds of pursing our water. We do have further relationship than water with Israel but it covers more of expertise and trade off-emergencies.

Concerning Israel, I think Egypt is on the same boat with Turkey. The Arab world has never forgotten Egypt's deal in Camp David, so Egypt is also in contempt by the rest of the Arab world for having peaceful relation with Israel.

According to Arab sources that I follow daily, Egypt is trying to establish greater economic ties with Israel and is trying to sell its natural gas to Israel. Some Arabic sources say that Egypt has actually sold natural gas to Israel yet Egyptian Ministries are denying that.

Omar Moneb-Student-2nd year -Political Science – Faculty of Economics and Political Science- Cairo University

His Excellency Ambassador. Murat Bilhan has specifically elaborated on the changes in the Middle East region and about the different perspectives of the two countries, I would like him to clarify how Turkey sees itself in regards to the Greater Middle East initiative.

Dr. Hassan Abou Taleb-
Center for Political and Strategic Studies- AlAhram

I think that this dialogue is very important and comes at a very sensitive moment in our region and also in our history. I have two small comments about the excellent presentations that we heard from both Ambassadors. Murat Bilhan and Dr. Nadia Mostafa.

The first one is related to what we can call the historical dimension of our bilateral relation. I am one of whom participated in five meetings and dialogues between Egyptian and Turkish intellectuals since 1986, and in every one of those meetings somebody raises something about the historical dimension of our relations and the history of the Ottoman Empire and how it affects our relations.

I don't think that it is very important to stress on this historical dimension in our relation now. Yes, it is very necessarily to put it in our background, but it should not be a barrier in our relations or in our looking for common grounds.

I was present in the first meeting between Turkish and Egyptian intellectuals held in Amman in 1986 and when somebody raised the issue of our history and how we can build new relations in the future. One of our colleagues- who was then the chairman of the Turkish delegation and an Ex-ambassador- refused to say one word about the Ottoman experience because he said clearly that this is history and they in Turkey now see new experiences.

Although I disagree with this, I don't think that it is very important to raise this experience every time we meet because we must build upon our previous meetings and dialogues and not to start from the historical level.

I think that we have to deal with Turkey as it is; also it has to deal with us as we are and to look for common grounds in the future. This is the basic question and dilemma, which is facing our political process now.

I can't blame Turkey for cooperating with Israel for many reasons. I am not going to say these reasons, but what is important

how can we use this good relationship between Turkey and Israel to make some leverage upon Israeli-Turkish relations and to give legitimacy to the Arabs and the Palestinian's. How can we use this relation to make a better situation for the Palestinians to return to the negotiation table? Therefore, the main question here is about the Turkish government and how can it play a positive role for stabilizing the area.

We have to convince the Turkish Government to play this role and to utilize its relations to achieve this. I think this is practical and positive for the Arabs, the Palestinians and also for Turkey and Israel in order to stabilize the region.

The second comment is related to the issue of the changes in the area. I listened to the presentation of his Excellency Ambassador Murat Bilhan. I agree with him that this area should be changed .I do think that the important thing now is not the description of the area whether it is "small", "big" or "great", but the issue is: how can we change ourselves.

The major question now among Egyptian intellectuals is: how can we achieve reform? How can we put an agenda for our political change? Should we change our identity for that? Should we change the position of our societies? This is the major challenge, which is facing our societies.

. I think after the Iraqi occupation the necessity of reform has been raised more intensely. After the American initiative of the Greater Middle East the major issue now is: how can we achieve this reform? I –as an intellectuals- feel pessimistic about achieving reform. We have spoken about political reform for a long time, but I can't see any effective action taken by the governments, not only the Egyptian one, but Arab governments as well. I always talk about self-responsibilities. But the question is: why have we reached this bad point in life? Why have we weakened our energy to achieve political reform? Although one reason lies in the Arab-Israeli conflict yet I think that the major reasons arises from within our societies. Thus, it is our fault if America comes and says to us: you have to change. Although Arab states refuse an outside role the question is

can we achieve reform by ourselves. I don't believe that we can do it by ourselves as we saw in Iraq.

Dr. Thanaa Fuad Abdallah-General Manager of the Political Comments Section- News Sector- Radio and Television-Cairo

I think that history is very important for the present and for the future, so I ask Ambassador. Murat Bilhan to comment my following remarks:

Eighty years ago Mustafa Kamel Attaturk said that the Turkish history is about a hidden race between the East and the West. On November 3rd 2002 when the new Turkish government won in Parliamentary elections they said that their main aim is the conciliation between Islam and democracy. Yet, it is said that the Turkish model is considered to be the final phase in the process of killing political Islam.

Counselor Hossam El Din Kassem Essa- Director of the Balkan and Southern Europe Affairs Department- Egyptian Ministry of Foreign Affairs

I would like to ask Ambassador. Murat Bilhan, as a political intellectual, what is his point of view on the relationship between the notions of: Islam, multi party system and modernity.

I am asking this question based on two facts: the first fact is that we have different views about the three notions. The second fact is that Turkey has a very unique, position in this regard and its situation as a Muslim country, a secular constitution yet using political Islam, but in the framework of a multi party system democracy. I think your experience will be beneficial for all of us.

Dr.ElSafsafy Ahmed AlMorsy- Eastern Languages Department-Faculty of Arts-Ain Shams University

Turkey plays an important role in the Middle East, so what is the expected role that Turkey can play in the future?

Ambassador. Murat Bilhan- Chairman of the Center for Strategic Research (SAM)

First, I want to correct certain notions and concepts, which had been wrongly and unintentionally used by some speakers. One of them was the mentioning that Turkey has aspired to be in the Wider Europe as well as the Middle East. This is not true because Turkey does not aspire to be a part of the wider Europe but aspires to be a part of the European Union. This is very important and I would like to underline that this is a misconception.

As far as Turkey being a member of the Middle East, Turkey is actually part of the Middle East and it is has been sharing the geography of the Middle East for long years now.

As far as secularism is concerned, commenting on Dr. Nadia Mostafa's statement, I wanted to underline the fact that Turkey considers secularism not in versus with Islam, but Islam and secularism are quite in conformity with each other. In that sense, our understanding of Islam is that it is a religion between god and man, it is a heavenly situation. But secularism is a state system, which has nothing to do with heaven but only the earth.

We are Muslims and true Muslims, but we do not mix heaven with earth. Now, this is a main point that we have to underline between secularism and Islam. They do not verse each other, but they are complementing each other.

Turkey was described as a semi- democratic country. Turkey is not a semi-democratic country, it is a democratic country. First of all, it has been mentioned in the European Union progress report that Turkey has no shortcomings in democracy. It has shortcomings in certain political criteria which are it mentions. This does not denote in any report either the council of Europe nor the United Nations nor

in any other international organizations reports. So Turkey is not shown as a semi democratic country, but it is a democratic country. It is a parliamentary democracy, it is a pluralistic country, a secular democracy, and it is a republic.

Concerning the mild Islamic model attached to Turkey, I do not agree with that definition, because there is no mild or fundamentalist Islam, but as far as we understand from Islam it is a religion in which there are certain rules that should be followed. I would like to say that religion is an individual thing, and individual human right to belief is respected in Turkey to its maximum standard and who ever says that he or she is a Muslim and he or she wants to profuse Islam, noone- not the state nor an individual or any institution -prevents him or her from practicing their religion. Therefore, there is no such terminology as mild or radical as far as Islam is concerned.

I have to underline the point that we go to heaven after we die, our spirit goes to heaven, what we believe is that we are going there individually not with the public, so the public has no right to interfere in that, and in the last day we pass to give our personal record to God's court not the society. So, the society has no right or authority to question us or impose any belief on us, it is between God and us.

As far as what Dr. Nadia Mostafa has mentioned, Turkey and Egypt have to tolerate each other and should see their existence as a fact. I would disagree with that judgment because we don't need to tolerate each other, but rather we have to singularize our efforts and to convert our missions on many joint interests. So we can easily count them, write them side by side and we can see that our interests are conforming as peace, stability, corporation, friendship, cultural relations, economic benefits and interests. So, we don't have to discriminate against each other but we should accept each other as present facts.

Concerning Ambassador Nabil Badr question, I think we need each other, I would totally agree with you Mr. Ambassador.

As for the Kurdish problem, I would like to say that we don't have such a problem. Turkish society is a melting pot and in this pot

there are Kurds, Arabs, Russians, Bosnians and Albanians. In fact in some cases the numbers of rooted ethnic groups in the Turkish society are even more than in their origin countries themselves. There are for instance more Albanians in Turkey than in Albania. Therefore, we are proud of this mixture, we have nothing against any minority, and actually they are not considered minorities at all- according to Lozanne treaty- because they have the same religion as us Turks. So they are very much melted in the Turkish society.

Some people have just attributed on the European Union pressures on Turkey, but no matter what form you might put it certain cultural measures can also be added to the Kurdish rights. If we talk about language right, to let them speak their language, teach it in the schools and to give them the right to have their needed media facilities television, radio, etc... these were short comings in the Turkish democracy in the past but now not any more.

If you consider the Kurds in our neighboring countries they are more deprived of their rights than in Turkey. So, Turkey is an attraction points for most of the Kurds in the Arab world. With this note I would like to emphasis on the dangers of playing with separation movements in other country.

Whether Turkey is a tool in the hands of the western powers and whether it will play a role in the Islamic world for the west, this is again a misconception, because Turkey is not aspiring to be a model by itself or to impose itself as a model of a mild Islam in the Islamic world or in the west. So in both ways and in both directions Turkey has no aspirations to be a model. Turkey may give its experiences in democratic life, in state system, republican system, parliamentary system, and other reforms, which it has accomplished, to our friends and the ones who want to benefit from them. We are ready to give them not despite their will but only upon their will.

Concerning the question about Turkey's position towards the Greater Middle East initiative, Turkey belongs to that geography but it- as I mentioned- does not aspire to be a model or role model in the Greater Middle East, because we believe that countries in the region have different situations and special conditions for change therefore any transformation or solution should not be imposed from the

outside. So, internal dynamics should have the upper hand in the transformation of the society to achieve higher levels of economic and social development.

Many speakers have touched upon the Palestine question. We believe that both the transformation in the region as well as the causes of ills, terrorism and other problems rising from the region are a result of the Palestinian problem. Therefore the Palestinian question should be solved in favor of the people in that region as soon as possible since it is a bleeding wound that should not be anymore considered by the outside forces as a strong card to be played with. This is extremely important, since the Palestinian question is in the center of all problems in the region.

As far as the transformations in the region is concerned, there are some remarks made on how that can be materialize with internal dynamics. I believe especially after the report issued by the group of Arab countries in their meeting in Alexandria is very good document that shows the intentions of the internal dynamics. That means that Arabs are able to transform themselves towards a more positive situation without interference from abroad.

Also I think we should solve one crucial question: what about traditions. All religions have their traditions with an identity to preserve. This is a big question in all societies including ours. I think there are bad traditions and good traditions, we have certain marriage and social traditions that we should share and continue, but there are bad traditions like for instance in Egypt there is female gentile mutilation which is totally unacceptable. I mean this is a criminal activity, which should be forbidden by the Egyptian society. We have in Turkey the honor killings. This is criminal and is a violation of human rights. These traditions should be eliminated in societies.

Thus I believe that the momentum for the change and transformation in our society will only be created by internal dynamics not by any American or external forces imposed on us.

Concerning the question on: Islam- modernity-multilateralism in Islamic government. How could you compensate all of these? For 80 years, we in Turkey have been experiencing secularism. Throughout the years of secularism Turkey did not lose

its religion as it was 80 years ago - 99% of the Turkish society remain Muslims. Even this percentage is higher than in other countries, which means we didn't lose Islam by applying secular system.

So far as modernity is concerned, we are indeed very proud of Attaturk, because he has transformed the nation from the dark ages to a level, which should be taken as an example for many backwards societies.

Concerning the question on Central Asia and the Middle East and what could the Turkish role be in the two regions? I would like to say that the Middle East countries are religiously and culturally affiliated. While for the Central Asian countries, the ethnic reference is important. They are both different. We have ethnic groups and linguistic relationship. We have pursued a very friendly relationship with these countries when they first emerged from the Soviet Union as independent powers. We have immediately established relationship with all of them and until now we have a network of agreements, which are already signed, by these countries. So, we are bounded by all these leagues and with all these countries and we are improving relationship with them even further. I think Turkey is at least- if not the first - major economic power in Central Asia.

Dr. Nadia Mostafa-Director of the Center for Political Research and Studies-Cairo University

I want to focus on a few main issues because many questions and observations have been made so it is very difficult to go through them one by one.

The first issue is about the model of change because both Egypt and Turkey face internal changes. Therefore this raises a question on the nature of the Turkish and Egyptian model and the relationship between Islam, state and society according to secular perspective or other ones. This issue is very important and it has been raised by Dr. Samaan, Ambassador Nabil Badr, Counselor Hossam Issa and by the reply of Ambassador Murat Bilhan.

So, I want to comment on two points, first: how these two models should be presented, as models of change in the area? To

what extent are they confronting constrains from the American initiatives in the area?

The other point is related to Ambassador. Murat Bilhan's intervention, he didn't correct some conceptions, but he presented another paradigm to these conceptions as conceived in the Turkish model about: Islam and democracy, Islam and state, Islam and modernity, Islam and society. But this is not the only perception and there are other forms of relations between Islam, state and society that are applied in other Muslim countries. So, the Turkish model is not the only explanation for this relationship. Therefore I consider this as another interpretation not a correction for a misperception of some concepts.

So, when I said that there is some kind of controversy between secularism and Islam, I mean Islam as a guiding for organizing society and state. In this point Islam is conflicting with secularism, because secularism, as Ambassador Murat Bilhan explained it, sees Islam as a private sphere not a public one. This is his interpretation of the relation between Islam, state and the society and the one applied in Turkey, but it is not the one applied or accepted in every Arab or Muslim countries. So, we have to admit that we have different perspectives to this issue that lies in the core of the future internal change in the Arab and Muslim societies in the next decades whether we approve or not. So, we have to think deeply how it could be done: according to the Turkish model which is accepted by Americans and Europeans, or could it be done through another model without interrupting or damaging the relations that should be kept between two sides of the Islamic geography (i.e.) the Turkish, the Arabic and the Persians as well.

It is very important to admit that no one has to force his interpretation on the other, and no one has to say that his interpretation is the only one or the right one or the universal one.

The second point raised is how this issue and other related ones -such as a minority- is utilized by Americans as a card of stress to impose regional solutions .The water issue for Egypt, and the Kurdish issue for Turkey present clear examples. Although the secular system in Turkey has allowed for it to be a melting pot for

different ethnic groups, we can't deny that there is a Kurdish issue on the southern eastern board of Turkey. It is a card that can be played with against the national integrity of Turkey. Noone accept playing with the Kurdish card against Iraq and Syria or the Coptic one against Egypt.

The third issue that I want to raise is the importance of history. Yes, we have to stop talking about the negative aspects of the relation between Egypt and Turkey according to the different interpretations of the Ottoman Empire era, because we have to admit that this era is the subject of different interpretations and different opposite point of views between nationalists, liberalists, Marxists, Islamists and so on. I don't see the Ottoman era in Arab world as an occupation era because I have perceived the Arab and Islamic history from different perspectives and I saw that Ottomans came to Egypt and the Arab world to protect it from European colonialism hundreds of years ago. But history is important in another way: to learn more lessons from it. The essential lesson that I have learned from it is that foreign intervention in this area is getting wider and deeper, and it is rising to its peak and is influencing the internal change in Turkey, Egypt and in other Arab countries as well as it will have impact and influence on the relation between the two countries. So, we have to take care of this, not as a fact but as a given.

Egypt cannot neglect Turkey or drop it. I have heard Ambassador. Murat Balkan saying that we don't want to take each other for granted but we have to form more fruitful relations between us and discover what are the common ground of our interests.

The last point, concerning Israeli-Turkish relations. Of course I know that there are relations between Egypt and Israel, some of them are publicly announced and some are not, because the issue of normalization faces great offensive stances from the Egyptian people. What I am worried about is not the economic side of the Turkish Israeli relations but the military one. We all know that in 1996, it was published and announced that there is a strategic alliance between Turkey and Israel, an issue which has been debated in Arab and international circles. What I want to comment on is that the Egyptian government understands the justification of Turkey in entering this alliance.

I think that the normalization of relations between Egypt and Turkey and between Turkey and the Arab world in general began in the mid of 1970's. This normalization has accelerated since the beginning of 1990's. With the end of the cold war and the peace process of Madrid regional and international conditions have facilitated normalization within the Arab world.

CHAPTER TWO

Aspects of the American Strategy toward the Middle East: Turkish and Egyptian Responses

American Political Strategy towards the Middle East after 9/11

Dr.Meliha Altunışık*

The attacks of September 11 had a tremendous impact on the US politics and foreign policy. In addition to their horrifying magnitude, the fact that for the first time the US was attacked on its mainland led to fundamental rethinking of notions of security and threat perceptions in Washington. The response brought the US into a genuine war, named the "war on terrorism," whose goals and geographic scope have steadily expanded. Although the Bush administration initially defined its strategy in solely military terms, and refused to discuss the so-called "root causes of terrorism", soon military strategy was amended by a political and socioeconomic one, at least at the discursive level.

The new strategy is based on the following arguments: The attacks of 9/11 led to the identification of a new geography, called the Greater Middle East, as a problematic area and the main source of threats to the United States. The involvement of the citizens of US's closest allies in the attacks and in *al-Qaeda* in general also led Washington to rethink its longstanding policy of prioritizing the stability in this strategic part of the world over other goals. Thus the new perspective argued that the Greater Middle East suffers from socioeconomic and political crisis and the regimes in this region fail to meet the challenges of modernization and globalization. This political, social and economic failure and crisis in turn led to extremism and anti-Americanism. In order to meet this challenge, it is argued, the US needed a political strategy.

Based on this analysis Washington plans to launch its political strategy, the Greater Middle East (GME) initiative, aiming to transform the Middle East at the Group of Eight (G-8) summit to be held in Georgia, US, in June 2004. Several members of the Bush administration have already talked about this initiative and thus made several of its aspects public. The working paper prepared for the G-8 summit was leaked to *al-Hayat* newspaper in February.[1] In short the initiative aims at

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[1] *al-Hayat*, 13 February 2004.

encouraging democracy in the region and promoting social and economic reform.

The initiative is loosely based on the 1975 Helsinki Accords which were signed by 35 nations, including the US, former Soviet Union, and most European states. The Bush administration definition of this region includes the 22 Arab countries, plus Turkey, Israel, Iran, Pakistan and Afghanistan. Despite this large geographical focus, the draft plan focuses on the Arab world and uses the 2002 and 2003 UNDP Arab Human Development reports to give a picture of a region in deep crisis. Especially low level of development, high illiteracy rates, unemployment, poverty, lack of women's empowerment and low level of access to technology are cited as examples in describing the crisis. Based on the "gaps" identified in the Arab Human Development plans, the draft plan includes measures to promote democracy and good governance, building a knowledge society, and expanding economic opportunities. The working paper calls for the assistance of the developed countries in establishing or strengthening independent election commissions that could monitor elections, in sponsoring exchanges of parliamentarians to discuss legal reforms and sponsor training for women interested in running for elected office. The plan also underlines the necessity for direct funding to the NGOs in the region for the promotion of democracy. This initiative thus aims to build upon some earlier more limited efforts by the Bush administration such as the proposal for a US-Middle East Free Trade Area within the coming decade or assistance programs under the umbrella of Secretary of State Colin Powell's Middle East Partnership Initiative. Yet it goes beyond them with an ambitious goal of tackling the issues of the region in a more comprehensive way.

Nevertheless, the new US strategy and its implementation face some significant challenges. First, the US policies as regards to Afghanistan, Iraq and the Palestinian issue have already turned into test cases in terms of US's credibility and its capacity to effect such a transformation. So far in all these cases the Bush administration has failed to pass the test. In spite of the fact that the US seems to have been more successful in achieving its objectives in Afghanistan in terms of toppling the Taliban regime and making a transition to a new one through the adoption of a new constitution and the establishment of a new government, there are still serious problems in this country. The problems

of insecurity and the questions about the consolidation of the new regime continue to remain as significant challenges. As to Iraq the situation is much more complex. Although the Iraq War was not directly related to 9/11 (the latter may have provided the pretext), it inevitably turned into a test case for US's new policy. The Bush administration in the debates preceding the war made the link by emphasizing the positive spill over effects of the Iraqi transformation on the rest of the Middle East. Thus the difficulty of transformation in Iraq raises more doubts about the GME project. Finally, the Bush administration's inaction as to the resolution of the Palestinian issue widens the credibility gap. Since 9/11 Israel successfully portrayed its policies to crack down on the *intifadah* as part of war on terrorism while the US intensified its efforts to unseat popularly elected Yasir Arafat. In the meantime, the US even failed to play a leadership role in activating the Road Map. Furthermore, the recent endorsement of the Bush administration of Ariel Sharon government's unilateral withdrawal plan that will lead to withdrawal of Jewish settlements from the Gaza Strip in return for an intensification of Israeli presence in the West Bank effectively preempts it. It is clearly contrary to the Road Map which stipulates that all the so-called final status issues, refugees, settlements, permanent borders and the status of Jerusalem, will be decided through negotiations between the Israelis and Palestinians. Although the Bush administration has been arguing that Arab world must reform before a solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict can be found, in general the lack of progress in the Palestinian issue and increasing deterioration of the US's image as an "honest broker" undermines Washington's credibility not only with the governments but more significantly with the public that the GME initiative aims to mobilize for reform. In fact, mainly as a result of these policies the US's image in the region is all time low; another issue that makes it difficult for Washington to implement such an ambitious project like GME initiative.

The US's enormous power and it's increasingly unilateralist stance also heightens concerns and brings charges of colonialism against the initiative. The method used by Washington so far, which is to a large extent unilateral introduction of these ideas, reinforces this view. The new political strategy is based on the assumption that the problems of this somewhat vaguely defined region show important similarities, such as "anti-Western ideologies, terrorism, failed states, and the drive to acquire

weapons of mass destruction." Thus the argument is that these issues should be tackled on a larger regional scale. The region defined in those terms overwhelmingly consists of Islamic countries and although there is some care not to define as such, some perceive this project as part of "clash of civilizations." Thus ironically the initiative strengthens the hands of those who are viewing the world through similar lenses in the Middle East. Finally, there is also skepticism as to when the moment comes to what extent the US is willing to sacrifice its other strategic interests in the region for the newly identified ones that are related to political and economic reform. There also seems to be extreme skepticism as to the US's motives in launching this initiative. Especially the timing of the initiative in the light of occupation of Iraq and the approaching US elections led cynics to argue that Washington wanted to deflect criticism of its policies both at home and abroad.

The regional countries were quick to respond to the draft plan of the US. More significantly three of US's closest allies Egypt, Jordan and Saudi Arabia criticized the plan as a unilateral effort to impose change on the region from the outside. In addition to reflect the general unease about the plan, the governments might have particularly concerned about the lack of reference to governments' role in the draft plan. In fact, the initiative seems to be prioritizing ties with the civil society institutions and largely bypassing the governments.

Despite these challenges and ambiguities the objectives of the GME initiative it seems that it will remain an important element of the US policy towards the region in the near future. Although they may have their differences with neo-conservatives as to the means, the so-called neo-liberals also espouse to the objectives of such a transformation in the region. Thus even if the Democrat party wins the upcoming elections it seems that there will be continuity in this respect.

Another important variable in all of this is to the role of the EU and possibilities of transatlantic cooperation in GME initiative. Interestingly the US's position came closer in a sense to the EU's, as the former seemed to realize that new security challenges of the post-Cold War era, (transnational) terrorism, weapons of mass destruction, mass migrations, failed (or rogue) states are symptoms of the deeper economic and political turmoil afflicting the region. The EU had already come to that conclusion and this perspective had been influential in the crafting of

the Barcelona Process in 1995. In the Wider Europe- Neighborhood policy the EU set out a new framework for relations with also the Southern Mediterranean countries. In this new policy the EU offers positive incentives to those countries that make concrete progress demonstrating effective implementation of political, economic and institutional reforms. However, although the EU and the US share same objectives they still seem to differ on means to achieve them.

The political strategy towards the Middle East seems to become a part of the transatlantic bargain. It is clear that the Bush administration considers this issue as an opportunity for a renewed basis for transatlantic cooperation against a common set of challenges. Dick Cheney, US vice-president, at World Economic Forum in Davos called on US's European allies and said that "Our forward strategy for freedom commits us to support those who work and sacrifice for reform across the greater Middle East. We call upon our democratic friends and allies everywhere and in Europe in particular, to join us in this effort." The transatlantic emphasis is clear in the way the Bush administration has been working on the initiative and plans to unveil it. Although there has not been much discussion with the regional countries, Washington has been keen to discuss the plan with the EU and plans to unveil it at the G-8, NATO, and US-EU summits in June 2004. On the EU side, however, although there is a general attitude of cooperation there is also skepticism especially coming from France. The possibility of negative spill-over of identifying with the US initiative to EU's own efforts can also led to further reluctance on the part of the EU countries.

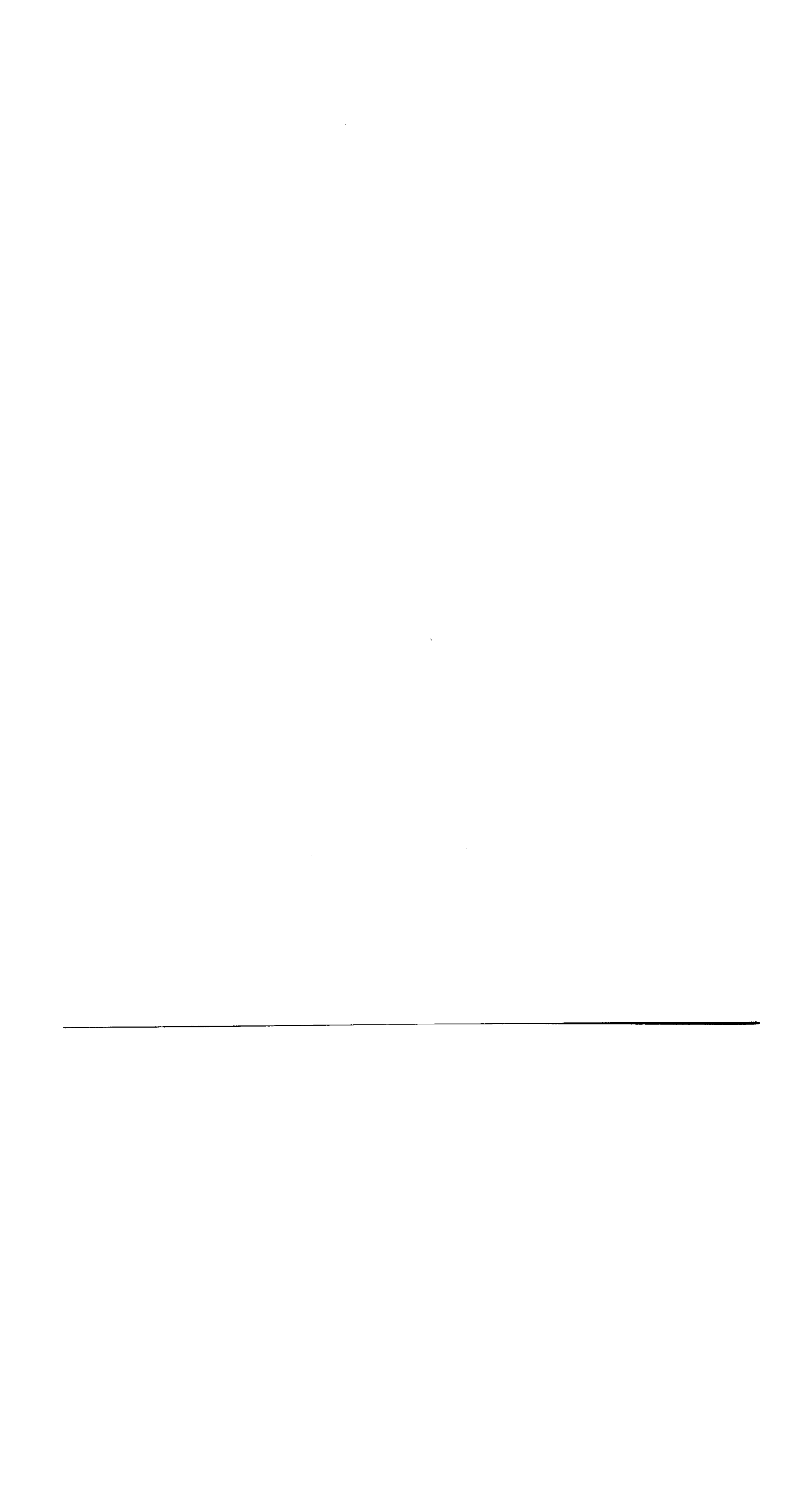
Irrespective of the GME initiative however the region faces real problems. UNDP's Arab Human Development Reports, authored by 22 respected Arab social scientists have already identified these problems. They called on the countries of the region to begin a process of transformation and on the developed world to provide the assistance necessary to make such a transformation a reality. There have been in fact indigenous calls for reforms in the region for some time now. The regional countries should take the initiative and the leadership in dialogue with their societies to craft their own genuine transformation projects. This process should be strengthened through regional institutional mechanisms and networks. Despite criticisms against the externally induced reform initiatives, the fact that both the US and the EU put

reform high on their agenda as regards to the Middle East has already hastened some reform efforts by the regimes. It remains to be seen whether these will remain as a facade to face off the pressures or turn into a real process of change through intense dialogue with societal actors.

Turkey has several roles to play in such a process although it has to be carefully defined. There are clear objections in Turkey to project the country as a frontline state in this debate. Yet the Turkish experience demonstrates an interesting case in the discussion for economic and political transformation. Needless to say Turkey had its all-unique characteristics. Thus the so-called Turkish model –or any other model for that matter—cannot be a blueprint. Yet as a Muslim country with a secular system, having a democratic experience since 1946, an economic transformation since 1980 and long institutional links with Europe and the United States Turkey has lot to contribute to the debate. The Turkish case provides interesting lessons as to some of the general arguments for transition to democracy. One such lesson is that this is a difficult and long process. Especially the consolidation of democracy may take several decades. The Turkish experience also raises issues as regards to secularism and democratization. It is clear that the Turkish secularization process is somewhat unique and difficult to replicate. However, two points need to be stressed: First, the way the Turkish secularization is understood in the Arab world is somewhat skewed. This process, although largely imposed from above initially, has largely taken root. It is this complex history of Turkish secularism that largely explains the emergence and the success of AKP (Justice and Development Party) today. In short the stereotypes of the experiences of Turkish secularism has to be revisited. More importantly, although democracy does not necessarily require radical secularization, it necessitates some division between religion and state. As the failure of the Iranian experience has shown there are clear tensions in the dual claim that sovereignty belongs to God and the people.

Finally, the Turkish experience clearly demonstrates the importance of the combination of internal and external processes for reform. Turkey's transition to multiparty politics in 1947 was a response to internal demands and changes as well as external transformations and incentives. Similarly the intensification of Turkish reform process in the

last decade has been a response to both internal and external pressures. As to the latter Turkey's EU membership perspective provided a clear impetus for reform and mobilized internal coalitions for that purpose. This is an experience Turkey can share, with its achievements and failures, with the countries in the region. In fact, already the reformers in the area closely watch the result of this process. With the clash of civilizations turning into a self-fulfilling prophecy the advancement of EU-Turkey relations has the potential to become a major impetus for the reform agenda in the Muslim world.



American Foreign Policy towards the Middle East: Military Aspect

Dr .Çağrı Erhan*

Cold War Years

The Middle East[1] remained as a crucially important region of the world for U.S. political and military strategies throughout the Cold War Years, mainly for two reasons:

1. Large energy resources, which was vital for western markets.
2. The region was an essential instrument for containment of the Soviet Union.

Due to the enormous increase in oil consumption by industrialized countries, controlling the free flow of oil to the Western markets from the Middle Eastern wheels, became an indispensable component the US foreign policy, which unlike the nineteenth century international dynamics, had globe-scale goals and interests.

American strategy towards the region evolved between 1950 and 1990 basically to increase the US level of control on the oil production and transfer on one hand, and to prevent any other major international actor, namely the Soviet Union, to penetrate into the area. We witnessed establishment of the Baghdad Pact inspired by John Foster Dulles, American Secretary of State in 1955, as first step to create the 'northern tier' of the Middle Eastern states along the Soviet Union's southern border.[2] Furthermore, just a few months after termination of the Suez

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[1] The term 'Middle East' was first used by American Naval historian Alfred Mahan in 1902 and became a generally used term after the Second World War. The term itself is not an invention of the 'Middle Eastern' people, instead, it reflects an Eurocentric or Orientalist approach.

[2] The first treaty to establish the Baghdad Pact was signed between Turkey and Iraq on 18 February 1955, and Great Britain, Pakistan and Iran adhered to the Pact in October 1955. The pact created reactions not only from the Arab countries of the region but also from Israel, which of all accused the alliance, "an instrument targeting them". The US did not become a signatory, fearing of offending Nasser and Israel. Following the invasion of Israeli, French and British troops to Egypt in 1956, the Baghdad Pact attracted more Arab reaction, since one of the

Crisis of 1956, the U.S. President Dwight Eisenhower declared on 5 January 1957 that, his country would help in political, economic and military terms to the governments of the Middle East facing a threat of internal or / and external aggression.[3]

In his speech, which will be named "Eisenhower Doctrine" afterwards, the US Presidents first underlined the importance of the Middle East, and referred to three points in the following sentences[4]:

1- "It [the Middle East] contains about two thirds of the presently known oil deposits of the world and it normally supplies the petroleum needs of many nations of Europe, Asia and Africa. The nations of Europe are peculiarly dependent upon this supply, and this dependency relates to transportation as well as to production! This has been vividly demonstrated since the closing of the Suez Canal and some of the pipelines. Alternate ways of transportation and, indeed, alternate sources of power can, if necessary, be developed. But these cannot be considered as early prospects. These things stress the immense importance of the Middle East. If the nations of that area should lose their independence, if they were dominated by alien forces hostile to freedom that would be both a tragedy for the area and for many other free nations whose economic life would be subject to near strangulation."

2-"The Middle East is the birthplace of three great religions -- Moslem, Christian and Hebrew. Mecca and Jerusalem are more than places on the map. They symbolize religions which teach that the spirit has supremacy over matter and that the individual has a dignity and rights of which no despotic government can rightfully deprive him. It would be intolerable if the holy places of the Middle East should be subjected to a rule that glorifies atheistic materialism."

3-"The Middle East, which has always been coveted by Russia, would today be prized more than ever by International Communism. The Soviet rulers continue to show that they do not scruple to use any means

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invaders was a member of the Pact. Following the military coup in Iraq in 1958, Iraq withdrew from the alliance and this move brought *de facto* end of the Baghdad Pact initiative.

[3] John Spainer, **American Foreign Policy Since World War II**, Washington DC, CQ Pres, 1988, p. 100-102.

[4] Dwight Eisenhower, "Special Message to the Congress on the Situation in the Middle East, January 5, 1957", http://www.eisenhower.utexas.edu/midleast.htm

to gain their ends. The free nations of the Mid East need, and for the most part want, added strength to assure their continued independence."

Then Eisenhower proposed to the American Congress to authorize him "to cooperate with and assist any nation or group of nations in the general area of the Middle East in the development of economic strength dedicated to the maintenance of national independence"; "to undertake in the same region programs of military assistance and cooperation with any nation or group of nations which desires such aid" and the most importantly, "authorize such assistance and cooperation to include the employment of the armed forces of the United States to secure and protect the territorial integrity and political independence of such nations, requesting such aid, against overt armed aggression from any nation controlled by International Communism."[5]

Congress gave the authority on 9 March 1959, and first time after the Second World War, the US President gained the power to send military troops, to the "desiring" Middle Eastern countries. Implementation of the Doctrine came soon after, in April 1957; King Hussein of Jordan applied to the United States for protection from anti-western and Nasserist movements, which endangered his country's independence. President Eisenhower ordered elements of the Sixth Fleet based in the Mediterranean, including the aircraft carrier *Forrestal* with 1800 marines, to the eastern end of the sea. King Hussein, with this help, bolstered his military strength and crushed the rebels.[6]

Almost one year later, in July 1958, just after the bloody military coup in Iraq, resulted with overthrown of the King, Camille Chamoun, Christian and pro-western president of Lebanon appealed to the US Government for aid to suppress a rebellion against him. On 15 July, one day after the coup in Iraq, American marines of the Sixth Fleet landed in Beirut, to be followed by an airborne brigade from the Seventh Army stationed in Germany.[7]

American military interventions to the Middle East through the Eisenhower Doctrine in 1950s helped to restore peace and tranquility only for limited time in limited number of countries. Instead, American

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[5] **Ibid.**

[6] Armin Rappaport, **A History of American Diplomacy**, New York, Macmillan, 1975, p. 438.

[7] **Ibid.**, p. 439.

interventionism caused tensions. Middle Eastern internal dynamics, rise of Nasserism and anti-Western arguments, coming together with growing anger against Israel and increasing infiltration of the Soviets into the region by using Khruchev's famous "pacific coexistence" approach gave rise to more instability.

Starting with late 1940s, *"to maintain survival of the state of Israel"* became another goal of American Middle East strategies. Therefore Washington gradually but insistently took part in Arab-Israeli conflict.

In late 60s, American policy makers and the pubic were mainly busy with the Vietnam War. By 1969, the need to redesign the structure of US foreign policy was apparent. Thus, President announced in Guam in July 1969, that the US would not try to solve all the problems of all world. This presumed retreat from overseas activity reflected the national mood for US citizens were tired of the Vietnam War and feared that the country was trying to do too much, and named as Nixon Doctrine. However, American activity in the crucial Middle East region did not decrease, but modified. Unlike the Eisenhower Administration, Nixon, chose to "intervene" to the regional affairs not directly but through regional partners.

Israel and Iran were chosen as the regional marshals. In ten years, two countries received nearly fifty billion dollars worth of American weaponry.[8] While on one hand, helping Israel against Egypt and Syria in 1973 War and "initiating peace process" between Israel and Egypt, which resulted 1979 Camp David accords, on the other hand, the US governments continued to supply arms to Iran.

After the occupation of Afghanistan by Soviet troops and Islamic revolution in Iran in 1979, the U.S. tried to constitute so called "*Green Belt*" by participation of moderate Islamic countries in order to prevent further advancement of the U.S.S.R. and possible spread of Iranian revolution. In 21 January 1980, President Carter announced his doctrine to protect US interests in the Middle East against newly emerged "perils". He stated the following[9]:

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[8] Eqbal Ahmed, "US's Mid-East Predicament", **Dawn**, 22 November 1998.
[9] Jimmy Carter, "State of the Union Address 1980", www.jimmycarterlibrary.org/documents/speeches/su80jec.phtml

"Three basic developments have helped to shape our challenges: the steady growth and increased projection of Soviet military power beyond its own borders; the overwhelming dependence of the Western democracies on oil supplies from the Middle East; and the press of social and religious and economic and political change in the many nations of the developing world, exemplified by the revolution in Iran.

Each of these factors is important in its own right. Each interacts with the others. All must be faced together, squarely and courageously. We will face these challenges, and we will meet them with the best that is in us. And we will not fail."

After evaluating the situation in the region, Carter underlined the importance of the Middle East oil for the United States in decisive sentences and declared that Washington will not let any power to control the region entirely:

"Let our position be absolutely clear: An attempt by any outside force to gain control of the Persian Gulf region will be regarded as an assault on the vital interests of the United States of America, and such an assault will be repelled by any means necessary, including military force."

This was an open challenge, however, during the last decade of the Cold War American military intervention to the Middle East did not go beyond of sending navy to the Persian Gulf in order to secure traffic of oil tankers while Iran and Iraq were fighting. Nevertheless, American military existence in the region gradually increased. During the Cold War Years American military strategy towards the Middle East depended on two pillars:

The first was American military presence in the region, which based on two components.

Basic component was the naval fleets monitoring and controlling the region. The Mediterranean squadron of European Fleet, which was originally established in early 19th century during the Barbary Wars, shifted to the "Sixth Fleet" in the 20th century. The sixth fleet of the U.S. Navy, having aircraft carriers, cruisers, frigates and Polaris-class submarines which were capable to launch ballistic missiles, was given two duties: To contribute containment of the U.S.S.R. and to remain

prepared to retaliate a possible Soviet invasion; and to keep the eyes on the Middle East developments, if necessary to intervene militarily. For instance the U.S. intervened to Lebanon and Jordan in 1957 and 1958 and to the Yom Kippur or Ramadan War in 1973.

Today, the Sixth Fleet consists of approximately 40 ships, 175 aircraft and 21,000 people. The Sixth Fleet in the Mediterranean is the major operational component of Naval Forces Europe. The principal striking power of the Sixth Fleet resides in its aircraft carriers and the modern jet aircraft, its submarines, and its reinforced battalion of US Marines on board amphibious ships deployed in the Mediterranean. Commander, Sixth Fleet has both US national and NATO responsibilities. He reports to the Commander-In-Chief, US Naval Forces, Europe (CinCUSNavEur) in the US chain of command and to CinCSouth when the Sixth Fleet operates as part of NATO as StrikeForSouth. The CinC Naval Forces Europe, based in London, is responsible for US naval operations in the European area, and also holds the NATO position of CinC Allied Forces Southern Europe, responsible to the NATO Supreme Allied Commander Europe. The CINC Naval Forces Europe does not have administrative responsibilities for support of US naval forces in Europe, which are under the cognizance of CINC Atlantic Fleet.[10]

While the sixth fleet is carrying a subordinate duty to intervene the region, the Fifth Fleet has been formulated solely to control Persian Gulf area and the Arabian Peninsula. The Commander, US Naval Forces Central Command is the naval component commander for US Central Command responsible for combat operations in the Middle East. Fifth Fleet was initially established 26 April 1944 from Central Pacific Force, and disestablished after the war. Through the 1980s several frigate- and destroyer-type ships and minesweepers were assigned to the Middle East Force as well as support ships. After the 1990 Iraqi occupation of Kuwait, the largest armada since World War II assembled in the Gulf in support of Operation Desert Shield, and ultimately Operation Desert Storm in 1991. The Middle East Force found itself operating under operational control of U.S. Naval Forces Central Command where it remained following the war.

[10] "US Navy Fleets", http://navysite.de/navy/fleet.htm.

During Desert Storm in 1991, the Commander, Seventh Fleet served as naval component commander for Central Command. Since the Gulf War, NAVCENT fulfilled the roles of both a naval component command and as the fleet command. Ships from the East and West Coasts comprised the fleet, but it operated without a traditionally understood structure or number.

By July 1995, the course of events made a new numbered fleet necessary. After a 48-year hibernation, the US 5th Fleet was reactivated and it now cruises the Gulf. Commander, United States Naval Forces Central Command (NAVCENT) exercises command and control over all naval operations throughout the AOR from a headquarters located in Manama, Bahrain.[11]

Second component of American military presence in the region, during the Cold War years was the American air force bases neighboring the Middle East. During the cold war years, American bases in Iraklion (Gournes) in Greece; in Incirlik Turkey; and British bases in Cyprus were ready to be used in necessary cases. Another British base, which was started to be used by American air force in 1970s intensively to control the Middle East was Diego Garcia.

Locating in a narrow tropical reef in the Indian Ocean, about 100 miles south of the southern Indian coast, the island served as a stationary aircraft carrier for the US military. Beginning with the preliminary site survey activities of the American "Seabees" in 1971, Diego Garcia turned into a huge base in just a decade. In 1975 and 1976, the US Congress authorized $28.6 million to expand the Diego Garcia facilities to provide minimal logistics support for U.S. task groups operating in the Indian Ocean. Additional projects were undertaken in 1978. World events in 1979 and 1980, however, forced a reevaluation of the U.S. defense posture in the Indian Ocean area which indicated the need for pre-positioned materials to support a rapid deployment force and a more active U.S. presence in the area. It was decided to further expand the facilities at Diego Garcia in order to provide support for several pre-positioned ships, loaded with critical supplies. Thus, what began as simply a communication station on a remote atoll became a major fleet and U.S. armed forces support base by the 1980s.

[11] Ibid.

The 1990, Iraqi invasion of Kuwait marked the most intense operational period in Diego Garcia's history. From 1 August 1990 to 28 February 1991, NAVSUPPFAC Diego Garcia achieved and maintained the highest degree of operational readiness and provided levels of support which outstripped all contingency planning. It also was used during American invasion to Iraq in 2003.[12]

In addition to the American military existence in the region, the second pillar of the American military strategy towards the Middle East, during the Cold War years was to cooperate with partner countries. Turkey, Iraq (until 1958), Iran (until 1979) and Israel were among those partners.

However, national interests of those countries, from time to time, prevented them to present an unlimited support to the U.S. For example, Turkey did not give permission to the U.S. to use Incirlik Air Base in 1967, and 1973. Turkey even terminated the operations in Incirlik between 1975 and 1978 as a reaction to American arms embargo on Turkey.

Post-Cold War

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, American military strategy towards the Middle East changed dramatically. During the Gulf War of 1990-1991, U.S.-led coalition forces fought with Iraq to end occupation of Kuwait. The Gulf War, not only paved the way of huge American military penetration into the region, but also ensured American presence there. After the war, the U.S. created a "safe haven" in northern Iraq and started to control Iraqi military by "operation provide comfort" and "operation northern watch".

In the post-cold war era the essentials of American policy towards the Middle East necessarily changed. Since there was no "communist threat" anymore, the function of the Middle East as a component of containment policy came to an end. However, the two other dimensions of American policy, namely to maintain safe transportation of Middle Eastern oil to Western Markets and to contribute to the existence of Israel preserved their place in American strategies.

[12] "Diego Garcia – Camp Justice", **Global Security**, http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/facility/diego-garcia.htm

In addition to those, beginning with mid-1990s, we witness a new concept or the third dimension of American policy, on which American new military strategy towards the region was built. First time in history, the U.S. policy-makers started to point out a possible "direct threat" from some Middle Eastern countries.

The 1996 and 1997 National Security Strategy documents announced by former U.S. President Bill Clinton, claimed that some *"rouge states"*, namely Libya, Iran, Iraq and Sudan were trying to develop weapons of mass destruction which were aimed to be used against the U.S. targets. The 1996, 1997 and 2000 strategy documents put US interests in the region as follows:

"The United States has enduring interests in the Middle East, especially in pursuing a lasting and comprehensive Middle East peace, assuring the security of Israel and our Arab friends and maintaining the free flow of oil at reasonable prices. Our strategy is harnessed to the unique characteristics of the region and our vital interests there, as we work to extend the range of peace and stability (...)A key objective of our policy in the Gulf is to reduce the chances that another aggressor will emerge who would threaten the independence of existing states. Therefore, we will continue to encourage members of the Gulf Cooperation Council to work closely on collective defense and security arrangements, help individual GCC states meet their appropriate defense requirements and maintain our bilateral defense agreements."[13]

"Roughly half of our oil needs are met with imports, and a large share of these imports are from the Persian Gulf region. Previous oil shocks and the Gulf War show the impact that an interruption of oil supplies can have on the world's economy. Appropriate responses to events such as Iraq's invasion of Kuwait can limit the magnitude of the crisis. But over the longer term, U.S. dependence on access to these and other foreign oil sources will remain important as our resources are depleted. The United States must remain ever vigilant to ensure unrestricted access to this critical resource. In the Gulf, where global access to critical resources is key, we will continue to demonstrate U.S. commitment and resolve."[14]

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[13] White House, **National Security Strategy**, Washington DC, 1996.
[14] White House, **A National Security Strategy for A New Century**, Washington DC, 1997.

"The United States has enduring interests in pursuing a just, lasting and comprehensive Middle East peace, ensuring the security and well-being of Israel, helping our Arab partners provide for their security, and maintaining worldwide access to a critical energy source. Our strategy reflects those interests and the unique characteristics of the region as we work to strengthen peace and stability."15

During the Clinton years, the *"direct threat"* concept was strengthened after the terrorist attacks to American Embassy buildings in Kenya and Tanzania and to the American battleship *USS Cole* in Yemen. Thus, the Washington Administration started to accuse the so called Middle Eastern rogue states not only for developing WMDs but also for giving support to terrorist networks. But, during the Clinton Administration, the United States did not initiate a comprehensive military operation in the region. Hitting Sudan and Afghanistan by Tomahawk missiles or almost daily attacks to Iraqi air defense instruments remained limited military activities.

However, during the first years of the Post-Cold War Era, American military capabilities continuously developed. During the Gulf War, the U.S. forces directed their attack on Iraq mainly from three sources: First, the American fleets in the Mediterranean, Persian Gulf and Indian Ocean were used. Second, some bases around Iraq, such as Incirlik, in Turkey, British Bases in Cyprus and Diego Garcia base in Indian Ocean were used by U.N. forces. Thirdly, U.S. started to use very long ranged planes to bombardment of Iraq. The third source was as of crucial importance, because the U.S. proved its capability to intervene militarily to the Middle East, without using any nearby bases.

Besides, during 1990s, American forces in the region were reorganized. The US Central Command (USCENTCOM), which was activated by President Reagan on 1 January 1983, became the permanent successor to the Rapid Deployment Joint Task Force, a temporary organization created by President Jimmy Carter in 1980 to project American power in the Middle East and East Africa. In its first year as a command, USCENTCOM conducted Operations EARLY CALL and ARID FARMER – both successful in quelling Libyan-sponsored

[15] White House, **A National Security Strategy for a Global Age,** Washington DC, 2000.

insurgencies in Sudan and Chad respectively. Other operations, with names like EAGLE LOOK, EARNEST WILL, NIMBLE ARCHER, and PRAYING MANTIS were successfully conducted throughout the 1980s by USCENTCOM. In the 1990s, USCENTCOM became known for its success in the liberation of Kuwait (OPERATION DESERT STORM) under the leadership of Gen. Norman Schwarzkopf, and for humanitarian intervention in Somalia, which turned into a military catastrophe.[16]

During and after the Gulf War of 1991, US gained more military bases and facilities in the region. For instance, Army Forces Central Command (ARCENT) started to operate three deployed headquarter sites in Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and Qatar. In addition, Central Command Air Forces (CENTAF) uses a base in Bahrain.[17]

After 9/11

When George W. Bush came to power in 2001, he gave impetus to American military restructuring in order to prevent threats from so called rogue states. To this end, the United States launched a new initiative created by Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, under the title of *"National Missile Defense"*. According to this new military strategy, U.S. would locate anti ballistic missiles (interceptors) to partner countries around the world in order to intercept ballistic missiles fired by rogue states against the American targets. During the very first months of 2001, the U.S. authorities started to negotiate with some countries in order to persuade them to take part in this new strategy, including some Middle Eastern countries.[18] Nevertheless the terrorist attacks in New York and Washington on September 11, 2001, slowed down this initiative.

Post 9/11 era brought new dramatic changes to American foreign policy. As briefly pointed out in the U.S. National Strategy document of 2002 or the so called "Bush Doctrine", the U.S declared that it will fight with all kinds of threats against Americans and American interests decisively. Bush furthermore stated that, the U.S. was able to overcome those threats with or without cooperation of other nations. He introduced the *"pre-emptive strike"* approach, and used this term to justify

[16] http://www.centcom.mil
[17] Ibid.
[18] Frank Gaffney, "Bush, Misilse Defense and Critics", **Commentary**, Vol.3, No: 2, p. 30-32.

Afghanistan and Iraqi operations. Some excerpts from this famous document are given below[19]:

> "Legal scholars and international jurists often conditioned the legitimacy of preemption on the existence of an imminent threat-most often a visible mobilization of armies, navies, and air forces preparing to attack. We must adapt the concept of imminent threat to the capabilities and objectives of today's adversaries."
>
> "The U.S. national security strategy will be based on a distinctly American internationalism that reflects the union of our values and our national interests."
>
> "America must stand firmly for the nonnegotiable demands of human dignity: the rule of law; limits on the absolute power of the state; free speech; freedom of worship; equal justice; respect for women; religious and ethnic tolerance; and respect for private property."
>
> "The adequacy of the capabilities of the United States to carry out the national security strategy of the United States, including an evaluation of the balance among the capabilities of all elements of the national power of the United States to support the implementation of the national security strategy."

Heralding the approaching war on Iraq, Bush Doctrine underlined that the United States would not tolerate proliferation of weapons of mass destruction in the region as follows:

> "At the time of the Gulf War, we acquired irrefutable proof that Iraq's designs were not limited to the chemical weapons it had used against Iran and its own people, but also extended to the acquisition of nuclear weapons and biological agents. In the past decade North Korea has become the world's principal purveyor of ballistic missiles, and has tested increasingly capable missiles while developing its own WMD arsenal. Other rogue regimes seek nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons as well. These states' pursuit of, and global trade in, such weapons has become a looming threat to all nations.

[19] White House, **National Security Strategy of the United States of America**, Washington DC, 2002.

We must be prepared to stop rogue states and their terrorist clients before they are able to threaten or use weapons of mass destruction against the United States and our allies and friends. Our response must take full advantage of strengthened alliances, the establishment of new partnerships with former adversaries, innovation in the use of military forces, modern technologies, including the development of an effective missile defense system, and increased emphasis on intelligence collection and analysis."

With the declaration of the Bush Doctrine, the U.S. military power and reference to the preemption became the top instruments to deter perils. Contrary to Clinton era, in which political and economic instruments were intensively used to protect American interests, in Bush era the main reference point of the U.S. foreign policy became the gigantic U.S. military power.

Afghanistan was the first country where the new strategy founded its area of implementation. Although supported by U.N. and NATO resolutions, American approach to the Afghan case, which can be summarized in the Bush phrase *"you are with us or with only the terrorists"*, was not used before.

Later, in March 2003, the Iraqi operation came. Despite the lack of a U.N. Security Council resolution and a deep crack among the NATO members, the Bush Administration was able to create so called *"coalition of the willing"* and enormous military superiority of the U.S. and U.K. troops brought a keen victory within 42 days. The number of the coalition casualties was only 677 including 495 wounded, while the number of Iraqi military casualties was over 20.000 deaths. The number of Iraqi civilians killed during the war was about 7-8 thousand.[20]

I will not go into details of the military operation and the causes of Iraqi defeat. Instead I will try to evaluate the logic of American military presence in and around the Middle East and its possible ramifications.

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[20] The American death toll reached 784 by May 2004. Number of American soldires wounded in action is 4327 by May 2004. More than 80 % of those numbers is after Presidents Bush's announcement of the end of the war in 1 May 2003. (Source, "Casulties in the US-led Invasion and Occupation of Iraq",
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2003_invasion_of_Iraq_casualties#Coalition_military_casualties)

250 thousand American and 30 thousand British troops joined to Iraqi occupation. Today around 132.000 American and 20.000 other nations' troops -mainly British- still preserve their operative positions in Iraq. Spanish troops completely withdrew from the country in May 2004.[21]

While challenged by a serious insurgency, occupation of Iraq gave a highly precious opportunity to the U.S. military, which it could not gain throughout the history. Given the fact that Iraqi airfields, ports and all military facilities are under the control and use of the American soldiers, Iraq became an unsinkable "U.S. aircraft carrier" in the middle of the Middle East. Using Iraq as a step point, the U.S. can easily reach to anywhere in the region. In addition, without any concrete military interventions to any country, the American military presence itself causes great concerns in the countries neighboring Iraq, which have uneasy relations with Washington, such as Iran and Syria. Even in the countries which had better relations with the U.S., such as Saudi Arabia and Jordan, a deep hesitation towards America's next move has emerged.

Thus, on one hand the American easy victory over Saddam Hussein caused retreats in Tripoli and Tehran, where the former announced its will to stop WMD program, and the latter opened its nuclear program to International Atomic Energy Agency Supervision; and on the other hand, huge American military presence in Iraq can be used as a tool to realize future reshaping of Middle East political and social parameters via Greater Middle East Project.

The increasing American military presence is not limited with Iraq. During and following the Afghanistan operation, again the first time in history the United States started to use air bases in Uzbekistan and Krygyzstan along with Afghanistan. Washington announced its decision to move its European troops from Germany to Romania and Bulgaria. And finally Georgia and Azerbaijan would offer air bases to the U.S.

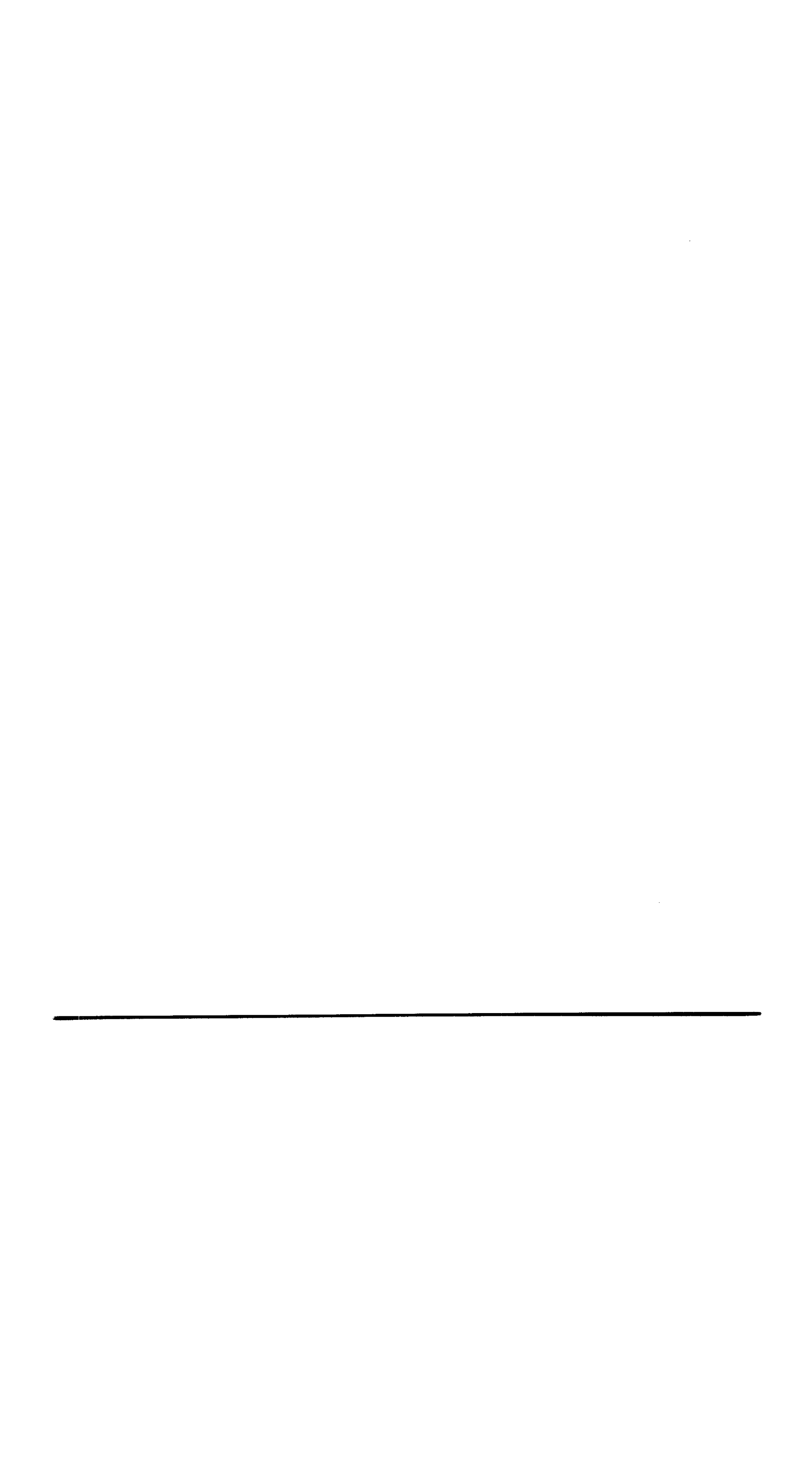
[21] The 33 countries providing troops to the coalitions are as follows: Albania, Australia, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Canada, the Czech Republic, Denmark, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Estonia, Georgia, Honduras, Hungary, Italy, Japan, Kazakhstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Macedonia, Moldova, Mongolia, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Thailand, the Philippines, Romania, Slovakia, South Korea, Ukraine and the United Kingdom. (Source, "Coalition Forces in Iraq", http://www.command-post.org/2_archives/009600.html). South American countries also announced their plan for withdrawal, after Spainsh declaration.

Within this context, I reach three conclusions.

First, American military presence in Iraq creates an enormous pressure over Middle Eastern regimes and ease their possible reaction to so called Greater Middle East Project. But it also gave rise to anti-American feelings in the region.

Second, American military expansion is not limited to the Middle East. In the contrary beginning with the Afghanistan operation, the U.S. soldiers are now located or planned to be located in a large area from Romania to Afghanistan, from Azerbaijan to Iraq. While the U.S. military presence in Iraq mainly causes concerns among the Middle East countries, its presence in Eurasia creates discomfort mainly in Moscow and some European capitals.

Third, the Afghanistan and Iraqi operations cost over 500 billion dollars to American tax payers. Almost one year after the announcement of the end of the war by President Bush, American military presence in Iraq costs for 2-3 billion dollars each month. It is highly probable that the Washington Administration to apply NATO to take part in Iraq, as it did Afghanistan in order to reduce its expenditure, in not to share the responsibility to provide stability in the country.



American Military Strategy Towards the Middle East after 9-11*

Dr. Mohamed Kadry Saeed**

The two papers presented in this session are greatly overlapping; the first is the military dimension of the USA foreign policy and the second is the US military strategy. Therefore, I will try not to repeat what was previously said and will concentrate on linking between the American military strategy and other aspects such as reform and change in the Middle East.

In general- and on conceptual basis- I would like to clarify what I mean by military strategy. Military strategy is a part of any countries national strategy, which encompasses not only of military aspects but also economic and cultural. The military strategy focuses on the military need to serve the countries interests. It is composed of four pillars: a vision, a task related to this vision, capabilities to fulfill these tasks, costs to fulfill these capabilities and other tasks.

Throughout the history of the Middle East and the USA, these four pillars were always evident. The USA was effectively present in the Middle East after World War Two, for example in the Mediterranean Sea there was the sixth fleet. Due to oil access, Israeli existence and other interests a theory evolved on how to protect American interests in the region. The vision during the cold war was to contain the USSR away from the warm waters of the gulf and its oil.

In the nineties -after the end of the cold war and the disintegration of the USSR -the vision shifted into the theory of dual containment with the emergence of new threats such as Iraq and Iran. At that time the USA allocated in the Middle East- in addition to the sixth fleet and its forces in Turkey- 25000 troops in the area and divided half of them on land and the other half in the sea on board of amphibious wheels or carriers. Therefore the number of troops in the region increased from 17000 to 25000 troops. These amounts of forces were drawn with respect to the importance of

* **Transcript of the presentation given by Dr. Mohamed Kadry Saeed**

** **Center for Political and Strategic Studies-AlAhram**

the Middle East and Gulf area. At that time the USA did not want -either for religious or political reasons- to put large amount of forces in this area compared for example to the number of troops allocated in South Korea that reach up to 35000 troops.

At the same time Arab countries themselves -such as Saudi Arabia- did not want American forces to be visible, thus the strategy was to allocate small forces for emergencies and in case of a crisis reinforcement is called upon.

The situation after 9-11 differed, the Iraqi threat no longer existed, yet the threat of Iran still existed coupled with the new threat of terrorism; a threat which is not hypothical since during the nineties two US embassies in Africa and a carrier in the red sea were destroyed by terrorists in addition to what happened in Washington to New York.

According to the old theory, if the Iraqi problem is solved they should reduce to the peacetime presence, which is about 25000 troops, but now they are thinking in another way.

Thus a new vision emerged on how to deal with such threats. In September 2001 the United States department of defense issued a new report – a report issued every four years- in which they laid down a new strategy. The main element of this strategy is as follows: The USA is facing a lot of uncertainties, it no longer faces the threat of the USSR, Iraq and Iran, but invisible threats such as terrorism. The USA built its assessment on what happened in 9-11 when it was struck by an unknown group in unexpected places by unexpected means. Thus they call this new strategy the "uncertainty strategy" in which America should prepare itself for a wider spectrum of threats.

According to this the USA changed its whole strategy towards the Middle East and laid another one based on:

1- Increasing the peace presence in the Middle East from 25000 troops to about 40000 troops

2- Enhancing the capabilities of these troops by acquiring new types of weapons. This is called transformation.

3- The employment of troops in the time of crisis will not be so big but will be transformed to more efficient groups.

All this will depend on the situation in the future, if Iraq will evolve pro American or anti American, peaceful or not.

I will end my presentation by summarizing the four aspects of change that happened in the Middle East with respect to the military strategy:

1st: Geography: We previously heard about the Greater Middle East, meaning that the Middle East instead of extending from Morocco to the Gulf, will reach Pakistan or the Philippine.

This extension will not just increase the geographical scope of the Middle East but its importance is derived from the evils encompassed in these extended places. For example in Indonesia there are explosions in Bali, most of the people coming Afghanistan have committed terrorist acts in Morocco, Riyadh etc

Therefore, countries of the region should prepare themselves to deal with the region if extended. For example, Egypt, when choosing its diplomats for these places it must be done differently, also soldiers and their training and weapons system and the countries intelligence. Thus, geography is very important since many things are built on it: intelligence, diplomacy, alliances.... etc

2nd: Mechanism of change: During the nineties there were different mechanism of change which were based mainly on treaties, dialogue, multilateral cooperation. After 9-11 the mechanisms of change have differed, which we can call "preemptive change" using war and intervention. I am not concentrating on this point just for war purpose but if geography speaks about space, mechanism of change speaks about time. Now in the Middle East things happen very quickly. When we speak about reform in our area we find some changes have already taken place in Egypt, Saudi Arabia and some Gulf countries, Iran, Libya and Arab league. It is not because this area is afraid of the American threat but because we are shifting to another scale of time in which things are achieved in a shorter time.

3rd: The security boundaries: The Middle East before was surrounded by some boundaries: USA, EU and NATO. All these existed with some influence on the inside, but now these boundaries have collapsed and they became inside the systems. The USA has 130000 troops in Iraq and most

of the EU countries now exist within Iraq, the Red sea, the Arabian Sea or the Indian sea. Noone in the past could have believed that Japan will be a boundary for us but suddenly we find that Japan is sending about 3000 airmen in the area. Countries in our area are now obliged to deal with new neighbors, either in a peaceful or confrontational way

4th: The change of values: Now we speak about some values related to security for example: we relate democracy, human rights, women freedom, childcare to security. Things that we used to see as moral are now connected to some new setup related to security. We are facing initiative from the EU, USA, and NATO as security bodies. We in the region have to deal with the situation that there are some changes in the values that we must understand and deal with.

COMMENTATOR:

Mr.Samir Morcous*

In the beginning I would like to express my appreciation to be part of this colloquial .I will try to share with you some ideas building on what my colleagues presented.

I will deal with three topics or three questions :

1- Did the American strategy toward the Middle East change since the World war two ?

2- Has 9/11 influenced in creating a new American strategy towards the Middle East ?

3- Issues raised by the reform initiative. I'll just focus on some of these issues. Maybe this will be useful to know how to deal with the American strategy.

Concerning the first topic, we should begin by remembering the Truman doctrine stating that USA has to support- at that time- the countries of the region against any threat especially the Soviet Union expansion in the Middle East.

Since 1947- and after Israel officially became present in our area in 1948- we can say that the USA has achieved a vital existence in the region. Since that time- and according to American national interest- three principles have been established as follows :

1- To Ensure all American needs of oil and flow of Arab money to the USA.

2- To confront radical regimes and movements .

3- To extend American protection .

4- To secure Israeli national security .

These are the principles, that by 1948 or by 1947, were developed under the Truman's administration.

*** Transcript of the comment given by Mr. Samir Morcous-Consultant-Coptic Center for Social Studies**

Taking in consideration that the U.S. foreign policy used the Middle East on political bases not on geographical ones. This means excluding or including countries in the Middle East will be based on U.S. national interests. This is a very important issue .

Since 1947 and up till now the USA vision toward Middle East has not changed. Reviewing all the literature -the official ones and those produced by the research centers, by the department of state, or by the Pentagon - will lead us to the same vision , that there is a fixed and stable policy or strategy towards the Middle East either under the democratic administration or a Republican one.

Here it may be useful -as an example- to refer to what is called in the USA as "The presidential study Group", which every 4 years the Washington Institute for Near East policy convenes its presidential study groups consisting of different statesmen, legislators, diplomats, and experts in Middle East policies. And usually these documents published regarding Middle East govern the Administration and presidents behavior and all new presidents refer to these documents.

For instance from 1988, we will find how the Bush administration referred to these documents and restarted as a result of its recommendations the peace process to enhance regional stability. In 1993, for instance, the document produced under the title of "enduring partnership report of the commission of the U.S – Israeli relations" . This document focused on the peace process, strategic cooperation and economic aid. In 1997, the document produced under the title of "Building for security and peace in the ME : An American Agenda" mentioned that after assessing regional changes since 1993 the USA faces more challenges than opportunities in the Middle East and needs to amend its priorities and policies accordingly specifically the need for improvements in policies in three main areas :the Gulf, the Arab – Israeli arena, and bilateral ties with key regional partners.

In 2001 they produced a very important document under the title of "Navigating : America and ME in a new century".

So, in general, what I want to say is that it is clear that concerning the position of the administration towards the Middle East there is a kind of continuity whether the administration is Republican or democratic.

There are core concepts and core alternatives governing the views and strategies of USA toward the Middle East.

It is important not to let the others put an agenda for us. It is time to put our own agenda for reformation.

DISCUSSIONS

Dr. Amr Darag
Vice president of the association of Cairo University Professors

I have listened to Dr. Meliha Altunisk presentation and Ambassador. Murat Bilhan comments. You previously mentioned that Turkey does not aspire to act as a model for reform in the region. Whether Turkey is aspiring for that or not, what we read in the literature written by people who are preparing the Western and American initiatives refers clearly to Turkey as a model. We heard about the discussions that took place between the Turkish Prime Minister and the American president when the former was visiting the USA in February 2004. So whether Turkey is aspiring or not to play that role, this is now being put on on the table and we have to deal with it.

From what I understood from your talks and comments is that secularism is in the heart of democratic reform in the view of the Turkish experience but if you look from the Egypt's perspective this is not the view of most of the Egyptians.

Thus I have two questions: will there be a chance for cooperation in the context of what is being offered now if the internal reform forces in a country like Egypt leads to an Islamic style of reform.?

The second question is related to the AK party. I really do not understand the differences between the AK party and other parties.As you mentioned the AK party is coming also out of the secular process in Turkey.

Ambassador. Nabil Badr
Ex Ambassador- Egyptian Ministry of Foreign Affairs

My comment on what has been said is related to the bases of Egyptian-Turkish Cooperation.

I think here- to be very Practical -we have to come to a conceptual understanding of the existing situation, there is no doubt for the need of reform in this part of the world.

Ambassador. Murat Bilhan
Chairman of the Center for Strategic Research (SAM)

I would like to comment on what some of the speakers have said. First of all, I believe that democracy is a process and no country - including the most advanced democracies or which claimed to be so –is a perfect democracy. Even the U.K. -which is the oldest democracy we know starting since the Magna Carta in 1215- is still suffering from shortcomes in its democracy. So democracy is an endless procedure that any country or people can jump in its boat whenever they desire to do so. Noone is late, but noone also should be imposed to adopt democracy. I would say that in a general accepted sense of democracy, there is an elected parliament and it is usually with a multi party system, free elections, NGOS, civilian popular, pressure groups freely expressing themselves unlike the totalitarian regimes yellow syndicates or similar forms.

We are very happy in Turkey to be Turks and we are proud of our democracy. We have experienced for 80 years with secular connotations and emphasis it in our democracy. By secularism I do not mean atheism, anti-religion or anti-Islam. We did not lose our religion during the course of implementing the secular system of state in Turkey. We are 99.9% Muslims. We are faithful Muslims, we go to our mosques, pray and carry out our religious obligations including rituals. Although rituals are the visible part of religion, the real religion is ethics. Ethical and Moral values are realistically observed in Turkey.

I would like to make a small comment on the AK party structure. Now I am not going to speak as an Ambassador but as an individual because I am not suppose to get engaged in domestic political life in my present capacity. Analysing that party situation, the AK party has come out into being a reaction party to the two-year ago existing parties which have mismanaged Turkey. There was a great deal of corruption and people were really unhappy. All colours of the society including the center right, center left, extreme nationalists, religious sections of the society, joined their forces to topple the parliament in 3 November elections 2002 and then they chose the present party to come into power. This is a very democratic process: changing the power in the legislative system by the free votes of the people, this is a demonstration of the peoples will.

Now, if we look at the layers of society which support this party they are in fact a combination of various groups in the Turkish society represented under the umbrella of the same party, they are defining themselves as conservative democrats.

The party is described by its leader and its president -the Prime Minister of Turkey- as a conservative democratic party, so it is not an Islamist party and that is an important point to underline. The Prime Minister repeatedly said that he is not Islamist. He does not support political Islam. He says that he represents the people as a whole and he does so in fact. Next week we will probably see -according to the public opinion polls- the local elections power being raised by probably 50%. This party's leader has visited almost all Islamic countries as well as the EU capitals. During all of those visits he repeatedly said that we would like to see a secular Europe not a Christian club. He underlined that, "If we are secular, you should be secular too.. And you claim to be secular so when you claim to be secular, you should act accordingly". This is what secularism means for the Turkish society as well as the AK party, its leaders and the people who support it.

Dr. Ola Abou Zeid - Deputy Director of the CPRS

I have to thank the speakers for their very interesting presentations. My comment is directed to Dr. Meliha Altunisk and specifically to what she said about secularization. Not being imposed by the internal elite -let alone external elite- it is the choice of the Turkish people. So, for me I think this statement is very revealing, because not only do we have to avoid imposing tailored ideologies on societies or people, but also it reveals the fact that people within society should be completely free to choose the way they want to lead. And for me, this would imply the importance of the existence of an open arena. Concerning the issue of secularization this would mean that if the followers of any religion in any society -and I am not speaking about Islam but about any religion- have a certain view on how to arrange their society -economically, politically, culturally, socially- and this view is the right one according to their religious belief, they have the right to reach the people, represent their point of view and to leave it to the people to either choose this way for arranging society, ruling people or not. But depriving them the right to reach the people under the slogan of

secularization, I do not think that would conform with what we are saying about democratic transformation or reform.

I clearly say that I am not with or against the rise of any religious movements from a human rights perspective, I feel that it is not correct to approach religion only from the perspective of the private or the individual right to belief but it should be approached from the view of the right of opinion and expression. It is the equal right of Marxists, liberals within a society to reach the people and represent their view points and then it is up to the people to choose how they want to be ruled.

Dr. Pakinam El-Sharkawy-
Lecturer of Political Science- Faculty of Economics and Political Science, Cairo University

I have two short comments: The first one concerning the U.S. strategy and democratization. I think we have to read these American initiatives on democracy within the context of the public relations campaigns. It is a new way of improving the American image. The new discourse calls the region to put USA annex to the democratization process. When seeing the different pillars on which U.SA basis its initiatives towards democracy on, they are social, economic, cultural, but when we reach the political dimension we find that the Americans are very much hesitant. They only speak about the social and cultural context, civil society which means they are speaking about a long process of democratization that envolves many stages.This is the kind of statement that is always said by U.S. officials when dealing with any critiques towards non-democtratic allies that the American administration endorses. Thus we have to look at these huge campaigns and initiatives as a kind of public relations campaigns.

The second comment concerning secularism. I think the model that Turkey now presents is very well fitting with the new international discourse especially the American one. The Turkish model is always considered as a good model to follow in the whole region. It is not excluding Islam, on the contrary, it includes Islam within a political democracy . We have to take care that the AK party represents a secular reading of Islam, so it is only one kind of Islamic trend. Yes, it is a model of democracy that includes Islam but it is a kind of secular reading. This point is focused on in the speeches of the Turkish Prime Minister and all

the officials of the AK party that they must differeniate between public and private life and they must be a moderate model in the region.

These statements characterises the Turkish discourse and they represent they fit very well in the regional and international levels.

Dr. Nadia Mostafa -Director of the CPRS

We are always talking about the American initiative for reforming the Middle East and so on, but till now we did not talk about the content of this initiative. We just say that America is asking for internal reform within the region and these initiatives carry a lot of challenges for the region but what is the content of these initiatives? What are they asking for? What are the needed changes?. This is a missing logic in our discussion. What is the difference between the initiative that Colin Powell declared in the end of 2002 and the original initiative of the Greater Middle East?

My second comment: do you think that democracy can be applied or consolidated in a region with such huge American military presence as Dr. Mohamed Kadri Saeed has mentioned that reflects a real change in American strategy towards the Middle East which is a part of its global strategy? Can we imagine a real democratic reform taking place in the region in such circumstances?

My last comment is directed to Dr. Mohamed Kadri Saeed. You mentioned the term of "boundaries of security" and said that they became inside the regime, can we define it differently by saying that they have turned to be an occupation now? It is no longer a matter of boundaries of security inside the region but a sort of an occupation. We have to call things with their real labels. It is an occupation now and it is a source of threat to our national security, interests, and independence.

Another comment is concerning the link you have mentioned between values and security. We agree that democracy, human rights & women rights are real values but connecting them with security discourse of American strategy is an insult to these values as this connection is only a justification for occupation even if we do admit that we need democracy and change in our communities and political systems.

Dr. Meliha Altunisik

The questions addressed to me were related to the issue of the compatibility between Islam and democracy and the relationship of both with secularism. This is a huge topic, I am familiar with its arguments and those who argue that there are different mechanisms within Islam like Shura and Igmaa' that make Islam compatible with democracy.

I think the crucial point here -and I tried to underline that- is that Turkey itself confesses to this, that Islam could be compatible with democracy and secularization and that is the importance of the Turkish experience.

Of course the essence of the matter, from my perspective, is whether you are going to organize your political system according to Islam or any other religion and then the problem arises. The problem is not embedded in Islam itself but if you try to organize the whole political system to be based on religion then it becomes rationally complicated. You have to look to the Turkish model on one extreme and on the other extreme you have the Iranian model. You have variations between them.

In Iran, the Iranian revolution tried to reconcile democratic principles with Islamic ones. The conflict starts when you have a system that says sovereignty belongs to the people and at the same time sovereignty belongs to God. Here the conflict emerges. I am not saying that there should be a prescription for all Islamic countries or all states in the region, that is up to those countries themselves. But I completely agree with your views that there should be an open market for ideas and ideas should compete, but unfortunately what has been happening is different. When you look at why political Islam has been under pressure in the region there has not been an open market for ideas and there are other specific reasons explaining why the protests and contestations against the regimes emerge in the Islamic discourse.

I think the whole democratization process in not about suddenly becoming democratic but it is a process entailing the improvement of social and human capital, economic development issues, etc. It is a very complex process. Then of course an important part of this would be the competition among different ideas and projects for the political system.

I underline and stress that this should not be imposed from the outside. But again, I don't see a problem of creating incentives and establishing across country alliances in terms of promoting reforms. There is no problem in that, but of course it is ultimately a domestic process for all countries.

Dr. Pakynam El Sharkawy mentioned that U.S. initiatives for democratization are a type of public relations campaigns. I raised some of the issues and challenges that the U.S project of the Greater Middle East faces and there are interesting discussions in that respect. One issue has been whether the U.S. will stick to this policy when its strategic interests are threatened. And I remember that after the end of the cold war the Clinton administration's Middle East policy had, in addition to its dual containment and Arabic-Israeli peace process pillars, this pillar of political and economic reform parallel to the third wave of democratization that has been taking place in Eastern and southern Europe. But this dimension was dropped when security interests took the priorty, so the same thing may happen again. Therefore, what is more important is the domestic demands coming from within the region for reform.

Dr. Cagri Erhan

There were actually no questions directed to me but I would like to say a few words about the Turkey being a model for Middle East countries. I think some 14 years ago after the collapse of Berlin wall and the USSR we witnessed the transition of many independent states in Central Asia, Caucas, Eastern and Central Europe. At that time I clearly remember a famous book that was published proposing the Turkish model for these independent countries like Bulgaria and Romania. The Turkish model was based on democracy and secularism. Now, after 15 years, Turkey is again presented by many parties including the American think tanks as a model for the Middle East countries and as a moderate Islamic country having democracy and Islam in its political life.

Yet it is ironic that the 15 years ago initiative -for Turkey being a model- did not give Turkey anything. Turkey was used by the U.S. and European investors to enter central Asian markets. And today the same thing might happen. So let us- together as members of this middle Eastern family- stop seeking roles in other foreign director's scenarios

Dr. Mohamed Kadry Said

I would like to emphasis three points:

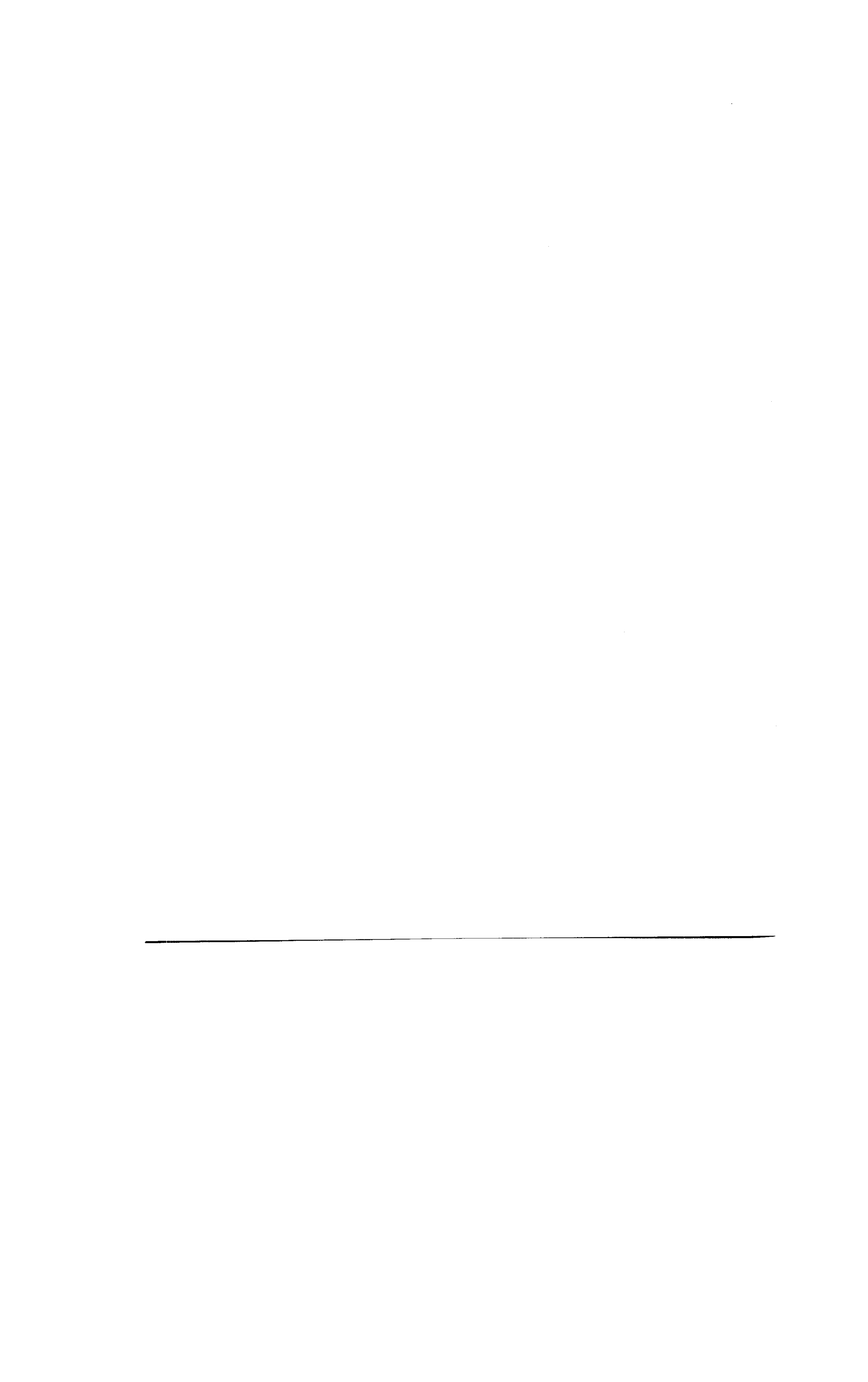
First concerning the question of whether democracy can be enforced by force or can we expect democracy with all this force. I do not think there is any contradiction between the two.We have many experiences in the past such as Japan in which there was force and then they had democracy. Japan was a specific case: the emperor was a god, the samurai were governing, and change at the time needed something surgical. The same happened in Germany. Even in the case of Egypt we sent our troops to Yemen and the final effect was the modernization of Yemen. We even have a monument for Egyptians there because they went and changed the regime and society.

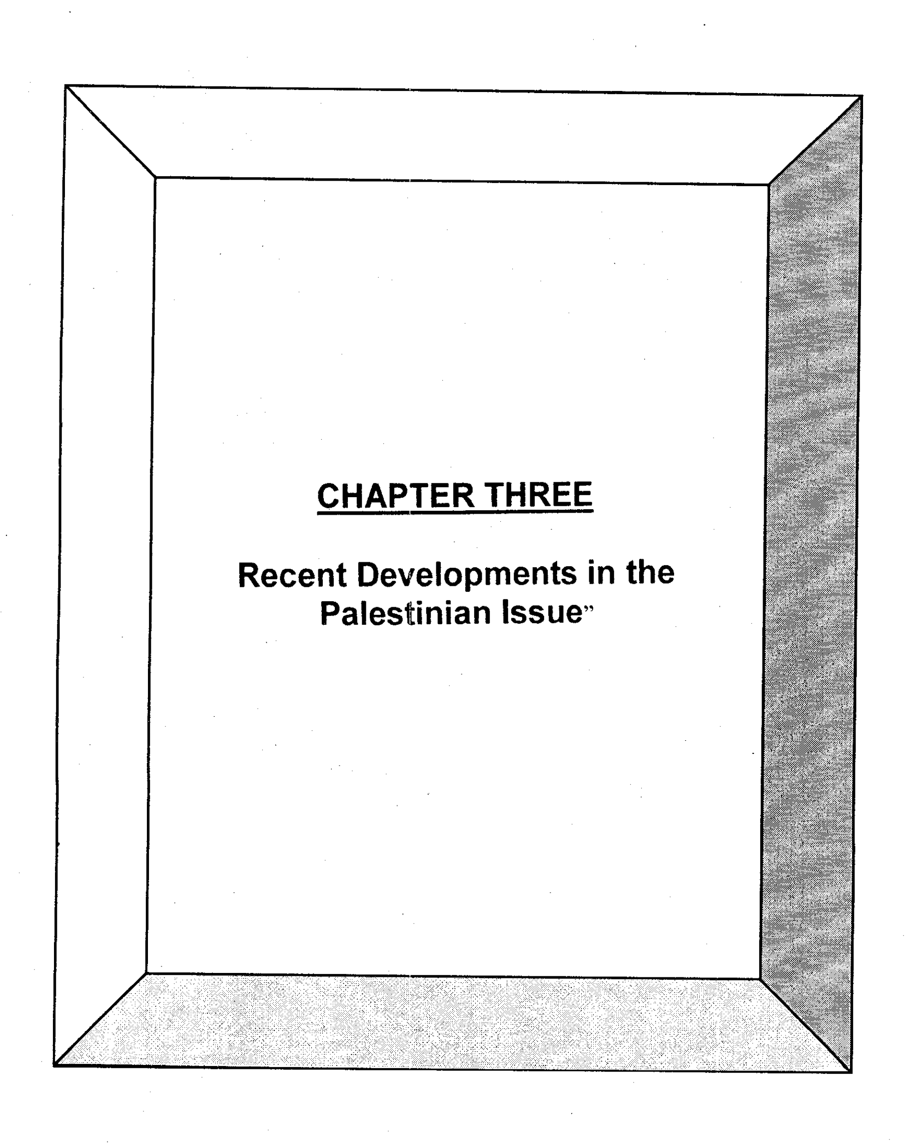
Secondly, concerning security and values: security is among the values, probably the most important value, even in Islam we say "Amn" and "Ameen". All these form a value, and other values such as human rights and so on are also related to "Amn" or "to being secure". The problem is that: if we refuse this sense, the others will simply not communicate with us nor buy or sell to us. Not because they want to impose there values but they can not trust or give money to a country or a system which is not democratic and is corrupted in some way or another. Even on the individual bases, none of us can deal with an untrusted corrupted person. So, value is related to security because security in itself is a value.

The last point concerns the boundaries. In my presentation I talked about "boundaries collapsing". I do not consider these outside countries - after being in the system- as boundaries. In fact they came with their armies, missiles, and every thing, simply because they found that their interests in the regions were threatened. We shared the region with them before, once when Saddam occupied Kuwait and if we had waited, he would have occupied all other Arab countries in the Gulf and their oil. These countries interest were threatened. They consume much more oil than us and they know that if the oil stops for one day, they will collapse. So, what most people imagine about these countries coming to Iraq under American pressure is not true. In my view they came because they

discovered that some of their interests were threatened and if they leave things as it is they will pay the price in the future..

To end my words, in my view all these values are not American values but human values developed throughout time. Bad values that are not compatible with time will die like communism or socialism. They were considered -for a certain time- values and with practice they died and were substracted from the value set of humanity. America now does not want to sign or ratify the international criminal court treaty thus it is neglecting an international justice value. So Americans are some times against some values invented and developed by humanity not by them.





CHAPTER THREE

Recent Developments in the Palestinian Issue"

Turkish Perspective towards the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict after 9/11

Dr.Meliha Altunışık*

Israeli-Palestinian conflict has constituted an important aspect of Turkish foreign policy towards the Middle East. The conflict led to polarization and instability in the region, which was seen as contrary to Turkey's interests. Nevertheless during the Cold War years, with the important exception of the 1950s, Turkey tried to limit its involvement in the conflict and in the region. Officially Turkey followed a "balanced" policy towards the parties, which in practice meant maintaining a working relationship with both parties. Although the balance tilted towards the Palestinians especially 1960s onwards, Turkey never considered cutting its diplomatic ties with Israel altogether. Similarly when the Turkey significantly developed its ties with Israel in the 1990s, it continued to enjoy very close relations with the Palestinian National Authority.

However, this was not an easy balance. Especially at times of escalation of the conflict, Turkey was under immense pressure and sometimes had difficulty in explaining its policies. Thus understandably, Turkey has been an ardent supporter of the now defunct peace process. This Process removed complications due to Turkish policy of uneasy balancing between the Arab countries and Israel especially since the 1960s. Following the Madrid Peace Conference Turkey upgraded its diplomatic relations simultaneously to ambassadorial level with both Israel and Palestinians, and reopened its consulate in Jerusalem.[1] Turkey also participated actively in the multilateral tracks of the Madrid Conference, especially in the Arms Control and Regional Security (ACRS) group, which was put on hold in late 1995. Turkey has been part of the Temporary International Presence in Hebron (al-Khalil) since its establishment.

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* **Associate Professor, Department of International Relations, Middle East Technical University.**

[1] Turkey had closed its consulate in Jerusalem and downgraded its diplomatic represantation with Israel to the level of second secretariat in response to Israel's declaration of Jerusalem as its eternal capital in 1980.

Finally, apart from these general principles, Turkey's general concerns vis-à-vis this region have affected Turkey's policy towards this conflict. For instance in the 1960s Turkey's increasing support to the Palestinians should be understood within the context of some changes in Turkey's foreign policy. Starting in the mid-1960s and especially in the 1970s, Turkey's policy towards the Middle East shifted slightly. During this period, part of its efforts at multi-dimensional foreign policy, Turkey tried to develop its relations with the Arab world in general. The new policy was characterised by increased support to the Palestinians in the Arab-Israeli conflict and developing trade relations with the oil exporting countries although Turkey was reluctant to get involved in the intra-regional disputes. Thus during the Arab-Israeli War of 1967 Turkey did not allow the US to use the bases and facilities in Turkey to help Israel. Again during 1973 Arab-Israeli War, Turkey refused to allow US planes rushing arms to Israel to refuel in its territory. Throughout the Cold War years Turkish officials continued to declare the US and NATO facilities in Turkey not available for non-NATO military actions in the Gulf or elsewhere in the Middle East without prior Turkish approval. Similarly the development of Turkey's relations with Israel in the 1990s occurred within the context of Turkey's increasing perception of threat coming from the Middle East. Problematic relationship with Syria, due to that countries support to the separatist PKK (Kurdistan Workers' Party), developments in Iraq in the post Gulf War era, and periodic crises in relations with Iran had coloured Turkey's policy towards the Middle East in the 1990s. It is within this context of increasing threat perceptions that Turkey improved its ties with Israel. Therefore, Turkey's policy towards the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has been inevitably affected by Turkey's general concerns towards the region.

The collapse of the peace process was considered as great source of instability for the region. When al-Aqsa intifadah started Turkey began its diplomatic efforts right from the beginning and became one of the first countries to respond. The Prime Minister and Foreign Minister engaged in telephone diplomacy to end the hostilities immediately. The former President Süleyman Demirel was selected to become a member of the fact-finding commission, known as the Mitchell Commission that was established to investigate the underlying reasons of the collapse of the

peace process. On the other hand, the government tried the respond to the sympathy among the Turkish public towards the Palestinians, increased especially as a result of the televised images of the intifadah. Urgent aid of 500 thousand dollars was sent to the PNA and some wounded Palestinians were brought to Ankara for medical care. In the UN General Assembly on 20 October 2000 Ankara voted for the condemnation of Israel for using excessive force against Palestinian civilians. Few days later Turkey's President in his opening speech of the Standing Committee for Economic and Commercial Cooperation of the OIC in Istanbul criticized Israel and stated that nothing could justify the use of force at holy sites and that excessive use of force by Israel resulted in high casualties. Turkey was equally critical however of the suicide bombings that led to the killing of Israeli civilians.

Turkey has somewhat unique position as regards to the Palestinian issue. Turkey has traditionally backed Palestinian aspirations to statehood and enjoys excellent relations with the PNA. At the same time Turkey has developed close ties with Israel since the mid-1990s. This situation presents opportunities for Turkey to act as facilitator between the two sides. In fact Ankara has been quite active in delivering messages to both sides and acting as an honest messenger. Similarly as part of its facilitator role Turkey has offered to host a new international conference in Istanbul. Nevertheless, there are also limitations for such a role as especially Israel prefers to rely solely on the United States to mediate this conflict.

Turkey has also been a supporter of international efforts to revive the peace process. Within this context Ankara supports the implementation of the Road Map. The Turkish position on the resolution of the conflict is as follows: Turkey supports a two-state solution, and the right of Palestinians and the Israelis to live in secure and recognized borders. As to Jerusalem Turkey opposes a unilateral change in the status of that city. 9/11 has not changed the basic principles of Turkish foreign policy towards the issue. It has however added a new urgency to the resolution of this problem from the perspective of Ankara. Thus Turkish government has been underlying the importance of resolving this conflict in facilitating a transformation of the region towards a more democratic and stable region and the establishment of regional cooperative security arrangements.

In the meantime Ankara has become increasingly critical of Ariel Sharon government's policies against Palestinians. The worsening cycle of violence led to some critical remarks by former Prime Minister Bülent Ecevit against Israel. Similarly current prime minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan criticized Israeli actions to an extent that a debate started as to whether the nature of relationship between the two countries is changing or not. However, these developments are in line with the general thrust of Turkey's policy towards this conflict: Despite the appearance of tilts from time to time the policy ultimately aims to maintain a balance between the two sides and continue to enjoy good relations with the parties. As stated above this is an uneasy policy and not always appreciated by the parties.

Commentator:

Dr. Cagri Erhan*

I would like to say some comments on Turkish – Israeli relations and about Dr. Meliha Altunisik's paper on Turkish-Palestinian issues.

First, I have never heard negative words from any Palestinian academic or statesman about the Turkish approach to the Palestinian issue. Yet now when I listen to Egypt, Syria or any other Arab country, I am faced with doubts and questions. The Turkish approach to the Palestinian issue is very well justified in Palestinians' minds because they live and understand that Turkey is persuing a balanced policy towards the Palestinian's and Israeli's. Turkey has good relations in terms of economic and military aspects with Israel, yet it never neglected the suffering of the Palestinian people and Israeli human rights violations in Palestine. Turkey extended all forms of aid to the Palestinian people. It is not my job here to mention the following but recently a Turkish delegation has visited Palestine and gave millions of dollars to Mr. Arafat himself.

Although Turkey and Israel intensified their relations in the mid 1990s, the level of relations today is not as high compared to mid 1990s. The circumstances at that time obliged the two countries to cooperate mainly in two areas. One was the economic and the other was the military. Economic relations was an obligation by the European Union. According to the custom union decision taken by Turkish-European union association committee, Turkey must enter free trade area agreements with some countries listed in an attached document to the agreement in which both Israel and Egypt are enlisted. Since then Turkey negotiated this free trade area agreement with Egypt but we could not sign it yet. We also started negotiating with Israel and within one year we signed our free trade area agreement and since then trade relations between Turkey and Israel have doubled within the context of this agreement.

*** Transcript of the commentation given by Dr. Cagri Erhan- Associate Professor of Diplomatic History, Ankara University, Faculty of Political Science**

The second dimension was the military aspects. Actually noone in Turkey nor Israel mentioned any strategic alliance or military partnership pact between Turkey and Israel. Yet whenever I read American writers or Middle Eastern writers- I mean Arab writers- I find a mentioning of a pact which makes me feel very ignorant because I am one who shares great interest in this issue and I know the context of the 1996 military agreement in which there is no mentioning of a pact or any third party. These two countries never targeted any third party whether Arab or non-Arab. But whenever I read other commentators or academic papers I frequently see terms like pact, alliance, axis, etc..

I should assure you that Turkish- Israeli relations are not at the level of a pact or alliance. They depend on two issues:

First: is the mutual military training assistance. Israeli pilots have been trained in Turkish air space for more than 7 years now. But the number of pilot trainees is decreasing compared to 5 years ago. Turkish air force officials are being trained in Israel especially in the field of airspace industries and electronic warfare.

Second: the renewal of Turkish F4 fighters. The situation during the signing of this agreement forced Turkey to enter such a relation with Israel because of the U.S senate stance and the refusal of some European countries to extend military assistance to Turkey. Although F4 fighters are originally American made, the USA did not give Turkey enough aid to renew them because the U.S. senate placed some preconditions for Turkey in order to obtain this aid such as human rights violations and etc.. At that time, Turkey was dealing with the PPK issue and terrorist attacks were at their peak. More than 30.000 Turks were killed in PPK terrorist activities between 1984 and 2000. Therefore the Turkish army tried to find other places which could offer help without any preconditions and Israel was waiting at the corner. As you know, after the end of the cold war Israel lost an opportunity to sell its arms to many countries. Israeli air space industries (IAI) and Israeli missile Industries (IMI) fired many of their employees so they were also trying to find new markets for themselves. Thus the interest of both countries coincided with each other and Turkey gave two big deals to Israel to renew their F4 and F5 fighters.

When Ariel Sharon become Israeli Prime Minister and with the siege of Arafat in Ram Allah the Turkish former Prime Minister Ecevit described the situation in Jenin as a genocide against the Palestinian people. This created huge reaction in Israel. I did not hear words from the Arab world. Nobody in any Arab capital described the situation in Jenin as genocide but the Turkish Prime Minister did. So I really have difficulties in understanding why after all these balanced policies towards Palestine, all clear terms of this agreement with Israel, and all very just speeches of Turkish statesmen – some of our Arab friends still accuse Turkey of being an ally to Israel?.

Ofcourse these are relations between countries, each of whom has its own interests. After 10 years of negotiations Turkey signed last month an agreement to sell fresh water to Israel by 2005. In fact, Turkey offered this water to Arab countries before Israel in the 1980s .The late Turkish President Uzal offered the peace pipe line to Syria, Lebanon, and all Gulf countries and Saudi Arabia but it was rejected by the Arabs. Now, it is very strange that when Turkey is selling fresh water- which is pouring into the Mediterranean sea and Turkish economy will get money in return- some of our friends in the region complain about selling this fresh water to Israel.

Thus we should be very careful to evaluate Turkish relations with Israel. Turkey has never- in its history- helped Israel against the Palestinians. It has always supported the Palestinian issue. I will give two concrete examples:

In 1956, when Israel, French and British forces invaded Egypt, Turkey recalled its Ambassador in Tel-Aviv and requested Israeli Ambassador in Ankara to leave Turkey..

When Israel announced the annexation of occupied territories in 1967 war from Syria and Egypt and announced Jerusalem as its eternal capital, Turkey once more recalled its ambassador in Tel Aviv and closed down its consulate general in Jerusalem.

These were very open and clear reactions to Israeli policies.So, having diplomatic relations with Israel, both Egypt and Jordan should understand Turkey very well. We can cooperate in this area together.

As for solving the Palestinian issue, it is better to solve the issue within the dynamics of this region without allowing any external power interfere otherwise we will not achieve a lasting and just peace.

DISCUSSIONS

Dr. Sema Kalaycioglu- Professor- Isik University

Turkey and Israel do not have an agreement of free trade area because free trade area is a multilateral agreement but they have a free trade agreement, which is bilateral agreement. Thus it is an agreement not an area.

Dr. Amr Darag
Vice president of the association of Cairo University professors

I have a comment that may clarify the question that Dr. Erhan was wondering about concerning the reactions of non-Palestinians to issues the Palestinians themselves do not reject. In order to understand this you may need to go to the level of the people rather than the governmental level. The same issue arises when you ask questions about the Turkish position, you respond by referring to Egyptian or Jordanian positions. You are right in terms of governmental or official positions. But if you go down to the level of the people who represent the majority and the real force in the region you will find the situation is very different.

I was talking with Dr. Meliha and I told her that the strongest demonstrations that took place in a country like Egypt for example over the last 3 years were in support of the Palestinian issue and not for local Egyptian issues.

We do not view the issue as an Israeli-Palestinian conflict like it is referred to; we look at it as our-Israeli conflict and many of us look at it as a Muslim-Israeli conflict. That is why you will find that many people in Muslim countries have real hard feelings about the cooperation between a Muslim country like Turkey and Israel. It is not a matter of agreements between countries or officials but a matter of people's feelings. We feel that the Turkish people are very close to us, they are Muslims like us, and thus we really feel bad to see strong relations between a Muslim country and Israel, which is looked upon as the head of a spear of a large project that is directed against the whole area. This is

an important issue that you should be aware of in order to understand our concerns.

Dr. Cagri Erhan:

I am a diplomatic historian and in the department of international relations thus I always compare historical situations with current events in order to understand the future. Do you know that Egypt was one of the Muslim countries that had close relations with the atheistic communist Soviet Union thus international relations take place between governments.

Dr. Meliha Altunisik:
Associate Professor- Middle East Technical University

I find this division between people and governments useful to some extent. In fact, governments- as the Egyptian or Turkish government- decides what is meant by national interest, but the peoples response to events are very different. This relates to what you said before about public opinion reacting more to Al-Aqsa Intifida and images of it. In the west, as well the same thing happens. In Turkey as well Islamic sentiments play a part but not necessarily the main part, there are other sentiments belonging to leftist groups & secular groups that react to what they were seeing on TV. There is a humanitarian aspect about it , some people think it is unjust and there has to be a remedy. So you find this in every country to some extent.

I think Dr.Cagri was reacting to the singling out of Turkey. It happens that governments think in terms of national interest and as I tried to explain, in the case of Turkish-Israeli relations, Turkey was responding at the governmental level to increasing perceptional threat coming from the region and it responded to that.

Ambassador. Nabil Badr
Ex Ambassador- Egyptian Ministry of Foreign Affairs

I have very short comments. I certainly appreciate the Turkish positive historical positions in supporting what has been referred to as the Palestinian issue. At the same time, things should hopefully be better understood and appreciated in the light of the following:

We find drastic controversial and contradictory actions in terms of choosing the timing for concluding what has been called or uncalled the pact of strategic cooperation between Israel and Turkey. Although Israels violent conduct in the occupied territories something has been materialized in terms of military cooperation which was in drastic contrast with the ongoings in this part of the world..

Quite frankly at the level of news analysts in the media and people in think tanks they do not separate the decision making in Turkey from the influence of the USA. In other words, they would put Israel, Turkey and the US in the same boat. That would culminate in the following question: Why now and for what reasons? There are many agents. It is not a secret that the United States is aiming to make Israel a super power in this part of the world at the expense of the whole region and in particular in relation to major countries including Egypt. We have stated that Turkey is a major country of great regional importance and the same applies to Egypt .

It is true Egypt has a pact of peace and we respect it but at the sometime we can never have confidence in the endless appetite of Zionism towards this part of the world . So in any terms, re-enforcing that trend not vis-a-via a peaceful government but a very aggressive government confronting the "Intifada" seems to be contradictory. At the same time, when I look at that in context of what the USA wants from this part of the world you will find the following assessments:

1- USA wants to marginalise major Arab countries including Egypt.

2- To deal with Israel as a super power.

3- Accordingly, to enforce its projects in terms of the global strategies of USA in this part of the world.

4- In the light of that, getting this part of the world "balkanized" or reorganized. I personally think that one of the wisest decisions adopted by the Turkish parliament, which had a very significant echo and appreciation here, was that Turkey did not push its forces into Iraq. That was wise for many reasons:

First: For the safety of the troops, secondly because that would have been greatly misread vis-a-vis Turkey and we do not want nor need that. As a matter of fact, we have common interest in terms of

coordination in the future of Iraq which is of great importance to you and to us as well.

I would like to point out that we are professionals knowing well that national interests impose themselves. Ultimately, it is not a matter of comparison between the relations Egypt has with Israel and Turkey. It is not just a matter of transparency but a matter of how that extension or dimension of relationship would affect negatively our status, our interest or regional interests as a whole.

Another remark, regarding sensitive issues such as Jerusalem, where is the Turkish voice? This voice should go beyond the official statement, declaration or meeting in such a forum to something more outspoken and more expressive of what you believe in. These are sacred places which have been degraded and are in bad status and receive very bad treatment in an unprecedented way -in particular Al-Aqsa Mosque and all that area even the churches .

I would say that Turkey -although it is secular- remains an Islamic country. This is a common ground in which, hopefully, the Turkish voice should be more expressive and outspoken.

A final comment is related to what you see taking place in Isreal and Palestine. We cannot really overuse the word terrorism without definition. Our official status here goes back to 1986. In that year Egypt has called for an international conference to deal with and define terrorism. It has never worked out till this moment. Noone is for terrorism, noone is for attacking civilians but equally noone is for occupation. Certainly, it should be also more outspoken that we are against terrorism ofcourse but what about Palestinians? What about state terrorism that they are suffering from?

Dr. Nadia Mostafa - Director of the CPRS:

I have several remarks: The first is concerning the nature of relations between Egypt and Israel and, on the other hand, between Turkey and Israel. Ofcourse there is an existing relation between Egypt and Israel but it is different in nature than the relation between Turkey and Israel either regarding its aspects, contents, and so on. For example, we know there is cooperation between the Egyptian government and

Israel in the agricultural sector, in trade, etc.. However, I think there is no such cooperation in the military side and I cannot neglect that the military side forms what we call the hard power, it is not a soft power.

My second remark is that the relationship between Egypt and Arabs on one hand and the USA and Israel on the other hand is a determinant for the Turkish policy towards Arabs. I mentioned this before because I feel that the relation between Turkey and USA is different than the relation between Egypt and USA even though there is a special relation between Egypt and USA till now. So when the relations between Arabs and USA and between Arabs and Israeli evolute, the relations between Arabs and Turkey evolute at the same time and vice versa. Thus I think of the American and Israeli relations with Arabs as a determinant of the Turkish policies toward the Arab region in general.

These were two general comments but I have some comments on specific points mentioned before:

Dr. Meliha has said that Turkey conceives the threat coming form the south as a motivation for concluding strategic relations with Israel. Does Turkey feel any threat coming from weapons of mass destruction (WMO) in Israel? We feel this in the Arab world and I think Turkey feels it and every one feels it with the acceleration of Israel WMD especially the nuclear ones. I don't know if Turkish policy makers are taking into consideration this aspect of threat in particular.

Concerning Turkish position toward the Palestinian issue: you have said that Turkey insists on the importance of stability in the region after 9/11. In the context of "Intifada" from one side (since September 2000) and the Israeli invasion of Palestinian national authority lands in Ram Allah, and Gaza on the other side, who is the responsible for breaking stability in the region from the Turkish point of view is it the Palestinian or the Israeli side? Because, till now, all the obstacles that prevent resuming negotiations and renewing the peace process are reciprocal accusation between both sides, that each side is the cause of violence and of interrupting the peace process. In the Turkish view who is responsible? And how do you see the Israeli concept about "Terrorism"? Ambassador. Nabil Badr has mentioned a similar point. How do you differentiate between Palestinian terrorism as determined by the Israeli side and the right of resistance of the Palestinian people to gain their

rights, state and independence? How do you perceive these important critical questions from the Turkish official point of view and from the non-official one?

My third point is that I think having special relations between Turkey and Israel is a calculation of Turkish national interest, But if Turkey is aware of and giving importance to the Palestinian issue, how can Turkey- as a regional power- use this special relationship to protect the Palestinian people and their rights, not just their human rights but their political rights as well? It is very dangerous to look to the Palestinian issue now as just a human issue not a political one.

Dr. Erhan has mentioned that Turkey is now selling water to Israel while in the past Arabs have refused the initiative of the peace pipeline in the beginning of the 1990s. But actually I remember why the Arabs have refused it because it was at the beginning of the launching of Madrid peace process when there was a big paradox between going to the peace process or enhancing economic cooperation with Israel and which comes first. The Turkish perspective was built on enhancing economic cooperation among Middle East countries which is a necessary pre condition for enhancing the peace process. Egypt and Arab countries differ in this point of view and refused, at that time, this perspective. They preferred moving quickly first at the political level in order to move on to the economic level. So according to this perspective we can evaluate why the economic regional cooperation failed especially after Natanyahou came to power followed by Barak and finally Sharon. Arabs refuse it because of the failure of the peace process..

Now we are in a different position: We can not say that now Turkey has the right to sell water to Israel because the Arabs have refused to take it before. There is 15 years between these two situations.

Dr. Pakinam El-Sharkawy-
Lecturer of Political Science- Faculty of Economics and Political Science, Cairo University

I only have one question for Dr. Erhan. I understood from your presentation that there was always a huge problem in promoting Arab-Turkish cooperation. I think we have to emphasize more on the other part

to balance the situation a little bit. You spoke a lot about Turkish – Israeli relations, What about Arab-Turkish relations?

If you enhace this part of the equation maybe you could balance the situation a little bit and it could create more stability in the region. What I understood from your words is that it is always the Arabs to blame for not accelerating this type of cooperation. You said it took Turkey only one year to conclude a free trade agreement with Israel while not reaching an agreement with Egypt although negotiating for years. Do you think from the Turkish perspective that it is Arabs' responsibility and there are no other real major obstacles?

I should point out here that the Egyptian discourse has always spoken about the importance of Turkey to the Arabs. Even after these enhanced relations between Turkey and Israel, the Egyptian discourse keeps emphasising on not leaving the field for Israel to be alone with Turkey. We must interfere and we must make tolerance by promoting Arab and Egyptian relations with Turkey. So my question is: What is missing here? Why havent both sides achieved this kind of promotion whether economically, military or in any other field?

Ambassador Murat Bilhan
Chairman of the Center for Strategic Research (SAM)

I would like to give some few comments. First, the Turkish government is currently preparing for a Turkish-Arab dialogue. This is new news for you and they would like me to convey this message in this meeting to transfer, if possible, some Egyptian speakers to that Turkish-Arab dialogue. Unfortunately I can not tell you the exact date but it will be officially announced. I was told this information by the private advisor of the Prime Minister before I came here. This is something which the Turkish government has been trying to materialize for long years.

Secondly, I myself-in my humble capacity in my center-have been trying to get the Israeli and Palestinian speakers at one panel discussion to address the Turkish audience about their causes together. We could cross-examine them and ask questions by the Turkish public to know exactly what they think and what their causes are. This is going to directly educate the Turkish audience. In fact I have almost reached the

end of this game. They have both agreed but we are still trying to set the date and Egyptian participants are welcomed with most pleasure.

Concerning Turkish relationship with Israel and Arabs, I can understand the feelings and the sentiments of the Arab people as Muslims feel that they are more near to Arab brothers and sisters than to members of other religions. This is understandable. But politics and people to people contacts are two different things. Our governments have always encouraged this people-to-people contacts. But these contacts have not been raised to the desired level because of certain suspicion, red tapes, biased visa arrangements because of the restrictions on the part of Arab states and not Turkey. The responsibility for that does not lie neither in the Turkish people nor in the Turkish government. Because we have a much more free visa regime for Arab countries than Arab countries apply to us. This is another point which I like to make.

Turkey is reputed and known very well by the international community as an extremely tolerant nation. We are always on the side of persecuted and suppressed people. We have protected under refuge many interesting personalities whom have taken asylum in Turkey and have been protected although their ideologies have been totally contrasting to the Turkish regime, for instance: In recent years we have protected Ayatullah Khomeni in Turkey. Although he was sponsoring a shariaa' regime (a theocratic state) he was protected against the shah regime in Turkey for five years. Even though Turkey was against communism and it was siding with the NATO but it protected "Trotsky" when he escaped from Stalin's tortures. He stayed 4 years in Turkey and was given a villa in the prince islands and lived a lucrative life there until he escaped to Norway and from there to Mexico to his fate. In 1956 war, from both sides there were asylum seekers in Turkey. In 1956, when Hungary was crushed by Russian tanks during the uprising 26.000 Hungarians fled to Turkey . The Swedish king, when he was defeated in a battle against the Russians came to Turkey and live 12 years in Istanbul. He bought the place where the Swedish embassy is now located. The polish nobles fled to Turkey in the 1700s when Poland disappeared from the European map and it was shared by Russia, "Germany", and also Austria-Hungary. These polish nobles have been given lands in Istanbul that are still existing up till now. The residents of this place are still keeping their customs, traditions, churches and etc. I do not want to count more but

Jews were among them. When Jews were persecuted by the Spanish state, they were given asylum in Turkey. They were also protected during WWII by Turkish diplomats. They were hidden from the Nazis searching for them. They were given the Turkish nationality to save them from persecution.

We should differentiate between the Jewish people and the Zionist state. We should be very careful in doing that humanitarian distinction. We Turks are not against the Jewish people but we are against the occupation of the Arab lands. We have always come under the persecuted rights of the Palestinians, we have always sided with the Palestinians.

Yet if we lose confidence in the Jewish state as well then we will not be impartial and the Jews will not trust in case we are needed for any facilitator ,mediation or playing an active role in the Middle East. So if the Egyptian brothers and sisters wants us to play any role in the Middle East, then we should have equal distance between the Jewish state and the Arabs. This should be understood and tolerated by them.

Mr.Awah Abu-Bakr - Arab Human rights organization

Although I am not Turkish or Egyptian having relations with Israel is not something strange especially these days. The question here is how could we use these relations to create peace in the area especially for the Palestinians. Not only because they are Muslims but because it is our duty. Besides the USA, Israel is the only colonization power. Palestinians are suffering. Giving them medical aid, few dollars, or supporting all international plans to bring peace to this area is not enough. So we have to find some way to stop the Israelis.

Why are we expecting Turkey to do that? Because Turkey is somehow our voice if we put to mind that most Muslim countries are third world countries. Turkey is our representative in the NATO at least so selling water to Israel and making their factories work can be considered as "Logistic aid" to Israel.

Dr. Sema Kalaycioglu- Professor- Isik University

I think what we call rapprochement is contagious. Turkey has started it with Greece and now we are going on the same direction with Syria. Not only trade relationships are improving with Syria but also political tensions are being released. Even the water problem is about to

be resolved since the state commission visited Syria last week after thirteen years of halting negotiations. Therefore we will probably improve economic and political relationship with Egypt in due time.

When it comes to Dr. Nadia Mostafa's comment on who is responsible of what is happenings between Israel and Palestine. I would like to quote a statement by Ex American President Bill Clinton that these two men –referring to Sharon and Arafat- who are elderly statesmen decided upon pursuing this situation and only the young people who are suffering. That is a statement that puts the responsibility on the shoulders of both parties.

I would like to make reference to an earlier time in 1994-1995 when the parties protocol was signed between Palestine and Israel to start economic and political relationships- customs union, flow of goods, employment opportunities for Palestinians in Israel and vice versa- but then Prime Minister Netanyahu opened new settlements for the Jews thus ending the protocol without being implemented. Therefore I am ready to put more responsibility for what was happening on the Israeli side especially the radical side.

Dr. Meliha Altunisk

I am not here to defend Turkish policies towards these issues and I might differ on certain issues from the official policies. As a scholar I am trying to analyze and understand the motivation of policies.

As to who is responsible for the current situation, I think that Turkey's position is reflected in the Mitchell commission, which puts the blame of the collapse of the peace process on both sides. Ofcourse there are some confusion about why Camp David failed.

As for the Weapons of Mass Destruction, Turkeys position is very much against the proliferation of WMD in the region especially that Turkey doesn't posses such weapons and any proliferation is seen as something that increases instability. In this regard, the Turkish position is closer to the Egyptian position for the creation of a WMD free zone.

As to what extent Turkish -Israeli relations has determined Turkeys relation with Arab countries in the region. Turkey has been enjoying good relations with Arab countries such as Jordan, as well as with the Palestinian authority. As an analyst, I was surprised with the

increased pace of improved relations with Syria. Therefore, Turkish-Israeli relations are not happening at the expense of its relation with the Arab world.

Since the late 1990's Turkish- Israeli, relations are not the same as they were in the mid 1990's. Turkey has been de-emphasizing that relationship especially now with the Iraq war. Today Iraq is very important in Turkish foreign policy towards the region and effects Turkey's bilateral relations. Turkey- Israeli bilateral relations are being judged within the Iraqi context. Therefore, there are limitations to this relations and this has been obvious since the late 1990's.

As for Jerusalem, this is a touchy issue in Turkey, and Turkey has been quite outspoken about it, not just recently, for example the annexation of East Jerusalem was strongly protested against.

As for terrorism, it is defined based on Turkeys experience with terrorism and Turkey is quite sensitive on that. Unlike the academic debate on terrorism, Turkish official policy is very clear due to its own experience.

Also Turkey is very clear when it come to the Palestinian issue, Israelis excessive use of force is criticized as is the suicide bombings. Although frustrations could be understood, the killing civilians are unacceptable from the Turkish point of view.

As to what Turkey can do, as an academic working on Turkish relations with the Middle East I wonder this myself, because there are limitations to what outside powers can do in this conflict. Except for the USA, the outside actors have limited tools to influence what is happening in the Palestinian issue. I asked my Palestian friends what do you want Turkey to do? What is expected of Turkey?

You said that some of Turkeys relations can be considered as logistic aid to Turkey but it is part of having normal relations with Israel because in order to have the trust of both sides Turkey has been trying to balance its relationship, but how can turkey turn this uniqness in a way to something more productive.

Dr. Cagri Erhan

I would like to mention three points:

First of all concerning Dr. Pakynam el Sharkawy's question on how to improve Turkish- Egyptian and Turkish- Arab relations. The problem can be described easily. As mentioned earlier by Dr Menoufy, the problem lies in the negative images against Arabs- not especially Egyptians- in Turkey and as well some Egyptians have negative images of Turks because governments use relations with other governments not only for international relations but also domestic politics.

In Turkish nation building history Arabs image was presented negatively in our textbooks and the same thing happened in Egypt due to the Ottoman history and the suffering they bestowed on Egyptians.

We should get rid of this like we did with Greece and other Balkan countries through putting our textbooks face-to-face and erasing negative images of each other. Therefore we can overcome many problems if we intentionally erase this negative controversial image towards each other.

The second point that was mentioned by Ambassador Murat Bilhan about Jerusalem. As a Muslim visiting Jerusalem I felt some fire in my heart when I entered the mosque under Israeli gun. Yet I feel the same when I see thousand of Muslims dieing in the tunnels of Mecca. By comparing these situations, Jerusalem is under Israeli occupation and Mecca is also the first rank Muslim sanctity yet Muslims from different countries are suffering.

For me I think we all together should insist that all these holy places be placed under international organizations control. Jerusalem as being a holy place for Muslim, Christians and Jews. As for Mecca it should be put under Islamic conference control.

Third point: About selling water to Israel, I think that the date of Turkish offering of pipeline was in the early 1986-87 thus before the peace process. The project is still on the table. We can sell our water to anyone since it is not transboundary waters.

CHAPTER FOUR

Iraq between War and Reconstruction

Reconstruction of Iraq- Major Uncertainties*

Dr .Cagri Erhan**

I would like to comment on the Iraqi interm constitution and Turkeys approach to the Iraqi problem but first I would like to make a comparison between what Bush said at the beginning of the war and what is happening now in Iraq.

When Bush declared war on Iraq he justified his attack based on some terms: First: Iraq is a country that possesses WMD and they are targeting to clear Iraq from them, Secondly: Saddam Hussein has close ties with some terrorist networks targeting innocent western people, Thirdly: Innocent Iraqi civilians are suffering from the Iraqi regime and the US coalition forces will bring democracy and welfare to the Iraqi people by this war.

The war has ended in 42 days but still we have problems with Bush's justifications since most of them have not yet been achieved.

First: No inspectors neither from the USA, UK or any other nation found WMD. This increased public reaction in the USA and UK against the rulers of these countries because they are accused of lying to the public.

Secondly: Concerning Iraqi aid to terrorist organizations, Iraq after the occupation became itself an area of terrorism, maybe it would be wise to say American led coalition opened the Pandora box in Iraq. Before the occupation we did not see such terrorist activities in Iraq but now everyday innocent civilians are targeted by terrorist groups as well as assaulting Americans and other occupation forces. The number of Americans killed in action were about 195 but after the end of the war the number plummeted to 350-400. The terrorists attack collaborators such as Iraqi policemen, translators and whoever cooperates with occupation forces. They also try to ignite a war between ethnic groups in Iraq. But the question is who are these groups? They don't label themselves as

* **Transcript of the presentation given by Çağrı Erhan**

** **Associate Professor of Diplomatic History, Ankara University, Faculty of Political Science.**

"terrorists" although they are called this by the Americans. They are composed of three groups:

The 1st are Sunni Arabs, former Baath members and former Special Forces members, the 2nd group are the radical Islamic groups, such as AlQaeda linked groups, the 3rd are Mafia type groups.

Thirdly, concerning the third goal of the occupation, which was bringing welfare and democracy to Iraqi people. It is well known that the most direct way to bring democracy is through direct elections, of course this is not easy in Iraq because US authority in Iraq could not form an atmosphere for elections, instead they formed an interm government council which recently reached anonymously an interm constitution which is considered the basic document to govern the country until the general elections which will elect a real council to draw the permanent constitution. Therefore this is a very important document although its signing was delayed many times .The nominees for this council will be announced according to the interm constitution.

However it seems that the parties- Kurds, Shiite and Sunnis- will have difficulties in agreeing upon the names of the nominees for the permanent council and mainly the disagreements will be between the Shiites who compose 60-65% of the Iraqi populations and the Kurds who consist of 15-20% of the population.

The disagreement will mainly arise from one article in this interm constitution which stated that if 2/3rd of the population living in the three regions of the country- mainly the northern parts were the Kurds are intensified- do not approve of the permanent constitution then the document will be announced rejected. This is very important because the Sunnis and Shiites have deep concerns about this article and they think that the Kurds will use this opportunity to establish an independent Kurdish state.

In objective academic terms it is to say that this interm constitution gives the right of veto to the Kurds thus a minority will have the right to veto the decisions taken by the majority. Although Talabany – the Chairman of the Kurdistan Patriotic party and a member of the Iraqi interm council- declared recently that the Kurds will respect Iraqi unity and territorial integrity their exists a rising tendency among the Iraqi Kurds to take more steps towards separation from Iraq.

From my personal opinion, if the situation continues like this no one or no power can prevent Kurds from gaining their independence from Iraq in 15-20 years time.

The USA has already paved the way for this independence beginning from early 1990's after the Gulf war by declaring a safe haven in the north of the country and not allowing Iraqi forces to enter this region and approved the Iraqi liberation act in 1997 and provided more than 98 million to Iraqi Kurdish groups to form their parliament, T.V. Therefore only the name is not on the table but their exists in north of Iraq a Kurdish- so called- state with all its organs and it has its autonomy.

The second problem concerns disarmament of Iraq. According to article 27B all the military and militia -excluding ones funded by the federal law –will become illegal starting from 30th June 2004. However almost all groups- the Shiites, Kurds and Sunni Arabs- have their own armed militias controlling their regions. It is not resistance, they are legal groups but still they must give their weapons to the occupation forces. The number of Kurdish armed militants are about 50,000 and they mainly operate in the northern part of the country. On the other hand the Shiites have three major militant groups operating mainly in Baghdad. The total number of armed Shiites militia is about 10,000. All the groups- Kurds and Shiites- have machine guns and heavy artillery -especially the Kurds- given to them by the American thus it is better to refer to them as micro armies rather than militia groups.

Although article 27B bans these armies, American military administration in Iraq didn't initiate any action to collect their weapons and abolish them. In contrary, as American armies withdrew gradually from the rural areas to Iraqi towns these micro armies found larger areas to claim control.

Practically the next step will be increasing armed activities, which will be targeted to obstruct general elections and referendums for the permanent constitution.

Today the situation in Iraq is similar to the Lebanese case in mid 70's, which ended in more than a decade of civil war. The US occupation forces in Iraq has no clear intention to start disarmament. Besides, the Bush government is reluctant to start such an initiative since it will destroy very fragile article consensus over the interm constitution.

At the end I would like to give some information on Turkeys position towards the Iraqi situation. Turkish parliament didn't approve sending troops to Iraq or to let American troops attack Iraq from Turkish lands and Turkey did not take part in the coalition forces. Turkey supports the territorial integrity of Iraq and the government repeatedly announced that all Iraqis with all ethnic and religious origins must have the same political, economic and human rights in Iraq.

However the interm constitution gives major rights to the Kurds and Arabs but it doesn't give the same rights to the Turks in Iraq, and I call them Turks although in literature they are referred to as Turcomans but they are Turks in origin since there are no differences between them and the Turks in Turkey, we speak the same language and we have the same culture. This distinction was essentially done by the British in the mid- twenties in order to prevent reunification of Turkish areas in Iraq with Turkey and Turkish officials at that time repeatedly rejected the term Turcoman.

Turks in Iraq are not mentioned in the interm constitution although they are about 600,000 to 1,5 million - we don't have an exact number because there hasn't been a census in Iraq since 10 years ago.

The establishment of an independent Kurdish state can't be admitted by Turkey and this is considered to be a red line. However after the occupation Turkey is gradually loosing its power to obstruct such an independent Kurdish state. Turkey's military presence in northern Iraq is limited to 600 Special Forces and its legal base comes from an agreement between Turkey and the Kurdish groups in the mid- nineties and its main goal is to prevent terrorist infiltration in its land. After the Iraqi occupation some terrorist organizations were destroyed by the USA such as the Ansar EL Islam but more than 4000 armed PKK militants are now in northern Iraq and they have their arms and can easily pass through Turkey because of the geographic situation.

That is why Turkey has a small number of military presences in northern Iraq. However after the operation neither Kurdish groups- which is seeking more autonomy and their final goal is independence- or the USA want Turkish troops on Iraqi soil. That is why US forces attacked Turkish military in Solomanya on 4/7/2003. This created a shock in Turkey. In addition the USA put a condition to an economic agreement

with Turkey that it would give Turkey 8.5 billion dollars of debt if it decides not to send anymore troops to Iraq in the future. Turkey has not accepted this term yet.

Officially, Turkey repeatedly announced that the separation of Iraq is not admissible and that it finds an independent Kurdish state as a threat to regional peace and security of Turkey.

Today brief cooperation between neighboring countries to Iraq such as Saudi Arabia, Iran, Syria is taking place. Before the war on Iraq, Turkish- Syrian and Turkish- Iranian relations were not as good as today but now as we share the same concerns and we are trying to cooperate to prevent segmentation of Iraq, which would cause more uncertainties and regional conflicts.

American War on Iraq- Causes and Consequences[*]

Dr. Ahmed Abdel- Halim[**]

I will start my presentation by stating that the events of 9/11 did not change the essence of American policy, it only changed the ways and means of implementing this policy and the beginning of using military power as a means to achieve political objectives.

The 9-11 events led to some important changes:

First: Drastic changes in the American administration, society, political and media language, also in American military power abroad and employing terrorism as a tool for achieving American objectives.

Second: The United States is at the top of the world now and that it has the right to do whatever it wants.

Third: Changes due to the information age and technology warfare. This is a very important change that has gone through many phases, starting with the Second Gulf War in 1991 when Iraq invaded Kuwait, the Balkan war in the mid- nineties, Bosnia, Herzegovina, Kosovo and the NATO forces involvement without the approval of the United Nations, the American campaign against Afghanistan and the American- British campaign against Iraq in 2003.

Major political strategic changes occurred as a result of the 9-11 events and we can state the following:

First: The United States initiated a three dimensional plan:

The first dimension is homeland defense through changing internal laws, putting more intelligent units and circles, using military force inside the United States of America itself. These are all symptoms of what the United States used to call "Symptoms of the Third World".

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[*] Transcript of the presentation given by Dr. Ahmed Abdel Halim

[**] Member of the Egyptian Council for External Affairs

The second dimension is maximizing military actions abroad and using a term that has been used by the Israelis for quite a long time, which is "Preemptive Strike".

In order to legalize this dimension the USA claims that its security doesn't lie only within its boarders and that the natural safety of the US - due to its geographical position between two oceans- is no longer a guarantee for security, thus they should start defending their security from abroad within countries or group of countries that form a threat to the US and that was how they formulated the preemptive strikes and started using military force to achieve political objectives. First stage in implementing this was in Afghanistan, second stage was in Iraq. Within this they formulated what they called "military warfare" which is using military force against less or non-military forces anywhere in the world.

The third dimension is what they called the "Distribution warfare" which was declared by President Bush after 9/11 when he stated that the US wants to fight terrorism for at least 10 years all over the world thus they have to put their strategic concepts into operational ones and form operational units to be used in different arenas.

Second: The use of the nuclear power doctrine. They start by using conventional forces then going directly- without any political decision- to using nuclear power.

Concerning this point there are two sides: one of them is technological and that means the development of new kinds of nuclear weapons that could be used strategically and operationally in many places. The second one is strategic; that is used towards three main states which are Iran, Iraq and North Korea then added to them other countries; Syria, Libya, China and Russia. By adding the last two countries this relays a political message to the world by saying that there is no second to the United States of America.

The operation in Afghanistan achieved its military objective but in order to achieve its political objective it requires the continuation of military operation to implement the US objectives which are: to reorganize this region, to end the Arab Israeli conflict according to the Israeli- American view and this is what we are actually concerned about because you saw what happened yesterday and the killing of Sheikh

Ahmed Yassin and how Sharon is endangering the whole area by his project of unilateral withdrawal from the Gaza strip.

Concerning the Israeli unilateral withdrawal from the Gaza strip I would like to stress some points because this is something that concerns my country: The treaty between Egypt and Israel which says that there should be 3 sectors in Sinai: sector A with limited forces, sector b with boarder guards, sector C with police. Therefore if they withdrew unilaterally from the Gaza strip this means that they are giving a chance to achieve one of Sharon mad concepts of forming a new state from Gaza to a part of Sinai; that means he is withdrawing from what he agreed upon with the Palestinians and in order to establish the basis of the Palestinian state in Gaza and the West Bank he is trying to change that to be Gaza and part of Sinai. Thus the question is: What will Egypt do? In one of the articles of the treaty between Egypt and Israel it says that we can sit together in the future and try to modify some of the articles according to the needs of both parties. So, the situation is as follows, they withdrew from Gaza unilaterally; they refuse to sit with the Egyptians to modify some articles. In this case, we will have to defend our boarders whatever it takes. That means we will send troops to guard our boarders yet that could be considered a kind of violation of the treaty, which will endanger the whole area including Turkey. That is why I paused at this point in order to explain this issue for you to be aware of what is going to happen.

Third: The United States determination on alliance or coalition policies. They have two kinds of alliance: traditional alliance with Europe and Japan, regional alliance with the Gulf and the Arab countries in general plus Israel and Turkey.

My presentation covers an important issue and that is the causes of the American war on Iraq. These causes can be summarized in the following points:

1-Exploiting the present international situation - the US being on the top of the international system- to end the problems of the Middle East and to remove all entanglements facing the peace process that they perceive.

2- To end the threats on Israeli security that both Iraq and Iran represented. And that could be achieved by invading Iraq, threatening

Syria and Iran, and enforcing regional stability according to American and Israeli viewpoint.

At this point a very important question must be asked: why the Middle East?

In the Middle East all the strategic and political movements of the US meet at one point. These movements in Europe come from the West to the East as illustrated by the enlargement of the NATO. In Asia it is just the contrary because they are moving from East to West and China has made at least five steps trying to prevent the emergence of any new power. Then we have the strategic importance of Central Asian Republics. Thus this will all meet in one focal point and that is Turkey. That is why when they talk about the Greater Middle East project Turkey is given a new role as a model for the region.

Concerning the consequences of the American war in Iraq they can be divided into geo-political and geo-strategic consequences.

As for the geo-strategic consequences of the war, it is the geo-strategic direction of force projection in the region. The USA is using force disposition and deployment according to its new plans of operation. The change in the strategic distribution of the American force, military commands and air power in Qatar, naval power in Kuwait, Bahrain and main ground forces in Iraq, strategic reserves in Oman and Emirates and new agreements have been signed with new alliance in the Middle East.

Geo-politically there has been a change in relative regional political weight of the states in the area and new roles for some parties of the region including Israel and Turkey. There has been a shift in the previous axis of political weights from Cairo, Riyad, and Tehran to new Baghdad, Ankara and Israel. The impact of such is affecting in particularly the Arab countries.

Applications of these new changes in solving regional problems, increasing economic cooperation without loosing any political attachment in the negotiation, American interests in the area would activate and will continue the use of the military power in the Middle East including pressures for domestic changes, to materialize the Greater Middle East project, encircling Iran and pressuring the parties in the area to get rid of

the nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction with the exception of Israel.

Now, we move to a final question, do we agree on the American intention in the region? The Americans have encountered resistance that they did not imagine when they were planning for what they call: "the day after" and now they are involved in what they did not plan for before the war.

Three factors will affect the American decision making in the area and in Iraq in particular:

First: Its ability to preserve an international coalition.

Second: The US domestic economic problem.

Third: The number of American human causalities.

Thank you for listening and thank you Mr. Chairman.

The future of a unified Iraq; the main political problems

An Egyptian perspective

Dr. Hassan Abou Taleb*

The following is a personal view regarding the main political issues facing Iraq following the approval of the Law of Administration for the State of Iraq for the Transitional Period. The law, opting for a democratic and federal formula on geographical basis, has ended the debate on the creation of a strong central government. The law was greeted with mixed reaction, both at home and abroad.

Those who welcome the law see it as a sign that Iraq is turning into a unified federal and democratic country, a state created by Iraqi hands to achieve a better future.

Those who criticize the law see it as an imperial mechanism that consecrates the division of Iraq, stimulates sectarianism and ethnicity, and places the country under the control of the lackeys of US occupation for a very long time. The law, according to this view, is a tremendous political setback for the greater and unified Iraq, for it recognizes Kurdish national rights and languages, admits that Iraq is a country of multiple ethnicities and nationalities, and confines Arabism to a mere segment of the Iraqi people.

This mixed reaction highlights the difficulties facing the reconstruction of Iraq as a stable country that does not threaten its neighbors and that guarantees political, legal, and economic rights for all its citizens, regardless of their sectarian or ethnic affiliations. The main issue here is how would Iraq regain its full sovereignty and independence? And, when will the US occupation end?

I am not about to revive the controversy over US claims that the main goal of the war was to build a free and democratic Iraq, a country emancipated from dictatorship and political despotism, a country free from mass destruction weapons and enjoying peace. These claims are all rejected by Arab public opinion. Most Arabs see the war as an imperial war aimed to pillage Iraq's riches (particularly oil), divide Iraq, and threaten neighboring Arab and Islamic countries - particularly Syria and

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Iran. Most Arabs believe that the division of Iraq and its subjection to US control aims primarily at protecting Israel and creating a regional environment enabling that country to control the future of the region. The launch of the US project for a Greater Middle East has consolidated the argument that Iraq is a prototype for US intentions toward other Arab and Islamic countries.

1-Egypt's official view

Concerning the official Egyptian view of first the war and then the occupation of Iraq, Cairo's main focus is on accelerating the handover of power to the Iraqis. Egypt believes that such handover would end the escalating security turbulence and prove that the US has no ambitions concerning Iraq. Yet, the deteriorating security situation and the absence of Iraqi security services capable of imposing law and order made Egypt more understanding of the need for US and allied forces to stay for some time in Iraq, in order to prevent the eruption of full scale chaos in the country.

The Egyptian official view does not address the details of the handover of power. The latter is seen as a matter for the Iraqis and the occupation authorities to decide. But Egypt is following closely various developments in the country and welcomes any steps taken toward power transfer. Egypt has welcomed the passage of the Law of Administration and voiced willingness to provide Iraq's interim Governing Council with any legal or technical help it may need.

This official view is in line with the set of Iraqi government to be a national one, not one imposed from abroad, a government having the acceptance and support of all segments of the Iraqi people, a government representing all sections of Iraqis. This is how Egypt sees the government in Iraq, and this view applies to the interim government as well.

2- Loopholes in the transfer of power

The handover of power is not an easy matter. Its path is strewn with political complications and practical hurdles. The plan announced by the US civil administrator on 15 November 2003 is politically and legally flawed, for it turns the bodies and institutions yet to be formed into agencies that lack legitimacy and clash with Iraqi public opinion. The call by Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani to hold elections leading to the formation of

the interim National Assembly - the assembly that will be in charge of drafting the permanent constitution and forming of the interim government – has disclosed the magnitude of the loopholes existing in the power transfer plan on one hand, and the lack of legitimacy of the institutions about to be created on the other.

It is worth noting that a large portion of the criticism voiced by Iraqi political and religious figures of the Law of Administration focuses on the illegality of the law, for it has been formulated by an institution that is not elected by the Iraqis, one appointed by the US civil administrator. Therefore, the law cannot claim to reflect the wishes and legitimate aspirations of the Iraqis.

3- Shiites mobilize against the interim law

Shiite religious figures have described the Law of Administration as a new Balfour Declaration, one that is not made with the best interests of the Iraqis in mind. They claim that the law was the result of concessions exchanged by the members of the transitional Governing Council, and therefore does not reflect the will of the Iraqis. The law, they claim, paves the ground for the division of Iraq and obstructs the formulation of a permanent constitution that meets the aspirations of the overwhelming majority of Iraqis.

Such negative assessment aims primarily as mobilizing Iraqi, and particularly Shiite, public opinion against the law. This mobilization can be viewed from two angles:

One, the mobilization aims to force the transitional Governing Council and the occupation authorities to change some of the clauses that alarm Iraqi Shiites (as well as a considerable section of Sunnis), particularly Clause C of Article 61 which grants the right of veto whenever two-thirds of the inhabitants of three provinces in a particular referendum reject a particular law or amendment. This clause was interpreted by some of the members of the transitional Governing Council as one protecting minorities from the dominance of the majority. The Shiites see the clause as an embodiment of the dictatorship of the minority in its worse form. The minority in question here is the Kurds, who are believed to have gained extensive rights through the Law of Administration, and hope to gain more still, perhaps even attain full independence in their areas in north Iraq.

A statement issued by 12 of the 13 Shiite members of the Governing Council notes that the members in question have approved the Law of Administration out of concern for national unity. The 12 members still have two main reservations, once concerning the right of three Kurdish provinces to reject the permanent constitution through the vote of two-thirds of their inhabitants. The other concerns the ban on any amendments on the transitional constitution without the approval of the Presidency Council and three-quarters of the 275-member National Assembly. This last requirement turns the Law of Administration into a genuine restriction on the future formulation of the permanent constitution.

The second angle is that the Shiite mobilization could be an attempt to bargain on the formation of the Presidency Council. The law envisages a three-member council, of one president and two deputies, without stating the ethnicity of these members. The Shiite bargaining may aim to increase the number of the Presidency Council members to five: three Shiites, one Sunni, and one Kurd. Either that, or the head of the Presidency Council would be a Shiite figure acceptable to key religious leaders.

Looking from either angle, one may conclude that the law has fomented tension and mistrust between the Shiites and Kurds. This tension arises form the fact that the law has approved the principle of federalism, recognized self-rule for Kurdish areas (but without change of the provincial borders at least during the interim period), made Kurdish an official language, gave the Kurds the power of veto at the Presidency Council and the right to retain the militias known as Peshmerga until such a time that an Iraqi army is created. Most likely, the Iraqi army would be created according to a new military doctrine that the US intends to formulate unilaterally.

These are all privileges which the Arab Shiites and Sunnis see as excessive, as a step toward the division of Iraq and the secession of the north. Therefore, the developments that occurred in the Karkuk area, particularly in the city that the Kurds want to turn into a historical capital of what they call Iraqi Kurdistan are significant. A semi-organized operation was conducted to rearrange the demographic structure of the Karkuk city. About 40,000 Arab inhabitants of the city left their homes, driven by harassment or fear of grave consequences. If such operation

were to be repeated in other areas of Iraq, this would mean that we are faced with an organized attempt to place social, geographical, and ethnic barriers among the Iraqis, a matter which poses a grave threat to Iraq's national unity.

4- The Kurds and the crisis of Iraqi national unity

The repeated attacks on Sunni religious figures and mosques, seen against the backdrop of Shiite-Kurdish tensions, suggest that someone is trying to foment doctrinal and ethnic sedition in Iraq. The cohesion of Iraqi society is the safety valve for the country's freedom and progress. This places a particular responsibility on religious figures, both Sunni and Shiite, as they seem to have extensive influence on the emotions of the Iraqi street. Any misjudgment by any side concerning a particular political matter may lead to infighting that can get out of hand.

Truth to be said, the issue of Iraqi national unity is not solely linked to US occupation, but goes back to earlier times. There are two main reasons for the inability of the country to formulate a concept of citizenship that supercedes ethnicity and faction. The first has to do with the manner in which modern Iraq was formed in 1921, when three Ottoman provinces - inhabited by Arabs, Kurds, Turkomans, Ashurites, and other ethnic groups were merged. The second has to do with the repression of minorities in which various Iraqi governments engaged since, a repression that reached its peak under the Baathists.

The 1958 constitution includes a clause asserting the rights of Kurds, considering them a second nationality in Iraq, and calling for a partnership between the Arabs and Kurds in the Iraqi homeland. Repeated attempts were made to grant the Kurds self-rule. One was in 1963, with the decentralization law. Another was in 1974, when the self-rule law for Kurdistan was passed. Differences, however, arose on two points. One was the demarcation of the Kurdish area, particularly the question of whether this area should include the oil-rich city of Karkuk. The second was the extent of power ceded to the Kurds, and the shape of their relation with the central government. Failure to settle these questions led to bouts of fighting between the Kurds and the central government. Neither of these questions has been resolved yet.

5- Acts of resistance and violence

Nations living under occupation have the right to resist. This is an undisputed principle in international law, regardless of the US claim that the war was to help Iraqis gain freedom. The legal status of US troops in Iraq is that of occupation forces. So much is admitted by resolution 1843, which accords a measure of international recognition to the role of the occupation authorities in performing a number of humanitarian, political, and economic functions in Iraq.

Following every act of violence in Iraq, questions are asked about the identity of the perpetrators and their purpose. Two remarks are due here:

The first is that, one full year after the occupation of Iraq, no particular group has claimed responsibility for any operation, including those carried out against US and other foreign troops.

The second remark is that the official view of the US forces and the interim Governing Council is that these operations are terrorist and carried out by al-Qaeda. We are told that non-Iraqi fighters have been arrested for perpetrating such attacks, but nothing has been disclosed to the public to corroborate such claims.

A survey of the Iraqi targets that came under attack would show that the responsibility of al-Qaeda, or some of its allied Islamic groups, is in doubt. At least, some of these operations cannot be linked to al-Qaeda or its allies on the local scene. One is tempted to think that more than one group is responsible for the acts of resistance and violence underway in Iraq. Four categories can be listed here.

First, groups linked with the defunct Baathist regime. These include the military and members of the Baath parties who have been harmed by the overthrow of the regime. Such groups could be responsible for attacks against occupation troops, against politicians cooperating with the occupation, and against ordinary individuals who work as translators or employees for the occupation forces.

Second, local groups linked to al-Qaeda. These would be providing sanctuary and logistics for fighters arriving from abroad to fight US occupation in the context of the larger confrontation between al-Qaeda and the US. Such groups would conceivably attack Shiite figures and

sacred sites to mobilize the community against US occupation.

Third, outlawed groups. These may engage in acts of violence to spread an atmosphere of chaos that would help them smuggle individuals, goods, narcotics, weapons, and other types of contraband. Such groups may also engage in contract killings.

Fourth, individuals with no organizational loyalties. Those would be people disaffected by the inhumane practices of the occupation forces - particularly during searches and random arrests of ordinary Iraqis - and are therefore motivated to engage in vindictive acts.

A fifth category may be added, one mentioned by British writer Robert Fisk. Iraqi opposition groups which were formed abroad, worked closely with the Americans, benefited from US occupation, and became important elements in Iraqi political life. Such groups, who lack popularity in Iraq, do not wish to see a speedy US withdrawal. It is conceivable that some of them may carry out attacks, such as those against Shiite centers and international organizations, perhaps at key moments - such as the visit to Iraq by a UN mission led by Lakhdar Ibrahimi to determine the possibility of holding elections ahead of the handover of power on 30 June 2003. Their aim would be to prove that security is fragile and that an early US withdrawal may lead to civil war.

6- Iraqi institutions and the problem of legitimacy

Legitimacy means that people are satisfied with the outcome of the political process, with the decisions made, laws passed, and institutions created. This popular satisfaction can only be guaranteed through elections. So long as the nation is not directly involved in deciding the future of the country and its political system, the question of legitimacy would remain.

So long as there is foreign occupation, the issue of legitimacy will not be resolved. This was the conclusion of the UN mission, led by Lakhdar Ibrahimi, published on 22 February 2004. The reports notes a number of basic problems:

The mistrust among all parties to Iraq's political life.

There are divisions within the political class. Sectarianism is worsening and clashes of interests are getting more severe.

The agreement announced on 15 November on the transfer of power would raise many questions on the legitimacy of future institutions. What is the federal formula that should be adopted, and when should it be introduced? What powers should the interim government have after 30 June 2004? What relations should be established between the National Assembly approved by the agreement and the Constitutional Assembly that would be elected in March 2005?

The agreement notes specific details that the basic law should cover and that should be binding on future legislators. This is a problem, for it places elected bodies under conditions set by interim institutions formed under occupation.

There is a conflict of interest so long as the members of the interim Governing Council are setting the criteria for their own participation in future institutions.

The above problems indicate the fragile legitimacy of the institutions created under the Law of Administration. The law sets the functions of various central federal agencies, such as the National Assembly, which represents the interim legislative power, according to Article 33. The functions of the three-member Presidency Council are mentioned in Article 39. The functions of the Council of Ministers are mentioned in Article 42. All of the above are defined as the Iraqi Transitional Government, according to Article 24.

The absence of trustworthy elections is a clear obstacle to the achievement of a suitable degree of legitimacy for all the institutions to be created in Iraq during and after the interim period. It is known that the UN report has concluded that the electoral process is faced with three major problem: (a) the security situation, (b) the absence of suitable legal and political conditions, and (c) the lack of resources. Add to this the technical problems, such as the lack of updated voting lists, of identity cards showing who is qualified to vote, and of a reliable population census.

The Law of Administration has created a broad political framework for the electoral process, when it decided that elections are to be held before the end of January 2005 to select the members of the interim National Assembly. The law also determined the conditions for candidacy. But there is still a need for an electoral law specifying various

stages of the electoral process. The lack of security and resources will have to be addressed before that date. So far, it is doubtful that elections can be held by that date in a manner that is both reliable and acceptable to all Iraqis.

7- The future of US military presence

According to official statements, with the handover completed on 30 June 2004, the US occupation will be over, the authorities of the US civil administrator will be terminated, and the largest US embassy anywhere in the world is to open in Baghdad. However, the future of military presence is still ambiguous, both legally and security-wise.

US and UK military commanders have repeatedly mentioned that their direct military involvement is necessary to guarantee security in Iraq and prevent ethnic and sectarian clashes. They estimate that military presence in Iraq will not be downsized in the next two years. This begs the question of the legality governing this future military presence, an issue on which there is no consensus among the Iraqis.

Formally speaking, the signing of security agreements between a sovereign Iraqi government and UK and US occupation forces would end the state of occupation, creating a lasting presence on Iraqi soil, one similar to the case in Japan, Germany, and South Korea. This would turn Iraq into a US military foothold, a matter that would affect Iraq's Arabism and the dynamics of the region.

The aforementioned UN report notes that the 15 November agreement contains a section about nonspecific security arrangements that grants considerable freedom of action to the alliance forces for security purposes. This section of the agreement commits the future Iraqi Transitional Government to yet undisclosed agreements between the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) and the Governing Council. This is something that would alarm most Iraqis, who believe that any security arrangements have to be negotiated by an elected government.

What this means is that any security agreements signed with the CPA with regard to the future of US military presence in Iraq would lack legitimacy. Such agreements may not help stop the acts of violence. Indeed, the attacks may escalate on the grounds that occupation is still ongoing and that collaborators are a legitimate target. As a result, the security problems are more likely to endure than end.

Post War Iraq: An Economic Perspective to The Challenges of a Country under Invasion

Dr .Sema Kalaycıoğlu*

Introduction

Iraq is an oil-rich country, which has been suffering from economic deprivation since early 1980s. The country possesses the world's second largest proven oil reserves. Aside from its huge natural gas fields, 152.3 billion barrels of Iraq's proven oil reserves claim the 15% of the world total. The market demand for the high quality Iraqi oil is always high. Although Iraq has always had the ability to produce oil inexpensively, she only had the ability to increase its oil revenue in 1970s, reaping the fruits of the OPEC's decision to increase oil prices in 1973. The windfalls of the 1970s gave the Iraqi economy an important chance for transforming from a backward country into a relatively more modern one. However, with the start of the Iran-Iraq war in 1980, what could have been spent to build a prosperous Iraq was spent to finance a long lasting war, which had left both countries in economic, social and political turmoil.

The 1980s represents a declining decade for the Iraqi economy because of the war and mismanagement. Despite efforts to liberalize the heavily regulated Iraqi economy and privatize publicly owned land and factories with the exception of utilities, oil, defense, petrochemicals, banking, finance and railroads, Iraq fell into the trap of rising prices, increasing unemployment, declining foreign remittances in general and declining oil revenues in particular. The Iran- Iraq war lasted 8 years. Before healing the wounds of the war, which caused mounting economic difficulties and human sufferings, Iraq opened a frontier against Kuwait in 1990. No matter what motives Iraq might have had, the invasion of Kuwait in 1990 was a historical mistake. The Gulf war and the economic sanctions, which followed the war, deepened the problems of Iraq. Therefore, the Gulf war and its afterwards can be considered as the

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beginning of a political decline for the Saddam era in Iraq, even though it lasted more than a decade.

The Iraqi mission of allied forces, which started in March-April 03 resulted as much economic consequences as the political ones. The success of the regime changeover could only be obtained if the Iraqi people could hold better economic prospects for their future. Therefore, the main objective of this paper is to determine what kind of economic prospects Iraq may have when the situation turns to normal, and how Turkey and Egypt could facilitate Iraqi economy to get back on its own again. To follow this objective in this paper I would like to review the state of the Iraqi economy prior to the military intervention by the allied forces. I also aim to focus on the cost of destruction and reconstruction in Iraq. The global and regional economic relations of Iraq in general and the Iraqi-Turkish economic relations in particular are also briefly examined in the paper. As I proceed, I intend to scrutinize the actual and potential role of Egypt, and Turkey as regional economies in the restructuring of the Iraqi economy. I would also like to discuss what the possibility of more functional cooperation is to help establish a viable economy with efficiency in Iraq.

The Iraqi Economy before and after the Military Intervention

The estimated cost of the Iran-Iraq war to the Iraqi economy is often pronounced as approximately $450 billion (Hazelton, 1994:73). This figure only includes the loss of oil revenue, foreign reserves and cost of lost infrastructure. The losses of human lives, man/hour of work and skill accumulation are not accounted in it.

The Iraqi mission against Kuwait is often attributed to the Iraq's loss of oil revenue due to the fact that Kuwait's excess oil production had caused decline of oil prices in international markets. Iraq's claim to have easier access to the high seas in the Gulf and the economic implications of not having it is also often considered as another source of friction between the two countries. However, no matter what her motive was, Iraq had to pay a great due because of its mission in the gulf in 1990s. The economic loss of Iraq due to its mission in the Gulf can be summarized in the following chart (Simmons, 1999)

Chart 1

The Economic Loss of Iraq in the Aftermath of the Gulf Mission

General Exports and Imports	90-97% decline
GDP	A decline of $31 billion
Oil Exports	A decline of $10-17 billion
Loss of Production	$5.1 billion
Production Costs	An increase of $1 billion
Postponed Development Projects	$0.7billion loss
Miscellaneous losses	$1.3 billion
Iraqi Soldiers	Loss of 50-120 thousand
Loss of Civilian lives	5-15 thousand or 20-100 thousand
Electrical system	$200 billion worth of reconstruction cost
Percapita income loss	A decline from $1088 to $438

Mosques, senior citizens centers, approximately 400 commercial buildings, 120 farm establishments, 58 banks, 150 utility companies, 646 elementary and junior high education institutions, 16 higher education institutions, 28 hospitals, 45 health centers, laboratory, pharmacy, military hospitals and archeological sights were bombed during the mission to crash the moral of the Iraqi people so that they would withdraw their support from Saddam Hussein (Simmons, 1999:13). Furthermore, the Kirkuk, Bayci and Al-Zubeir oil plants, and oil tankers, which had the capacity of 100.000 metric tons, were destructed. The bombing of the Mina al-Ahmed oil terminal became a major destruction for Iraq, when the burning of the oil also created environmental problems for the country.

Economic sanctions also crippled the Iraqi economy throughout the 1990s. The country the major source of income of which comes from

exports of oil started to trade according to the United Nations Security Council humanitarian (oil for food) program under the article 986. Only after 2001 sanctions were relaxed and with the supplementary decision no 1284, the ceilings to Iraqi imports were expanded. Additionally foreign investment to oil sectors of Iraq was permitted. Therefore, as of 2001 Iraq's foreign economic relations were significantly improved (Irak Ekonomisi ve Türkiye ile İlişkileri, 2001:1-3) and its economy started a slow recovery. The improvement was also supported by the increasing oil exports of the country to the rest of the world.

Nevertheless, even after the improvements of its international relations Iraq has been under strenuous economic conditions as the country had to pay war reparations to Kuwait; and its oil plants and connected pipelines needed replacement. The agriculture of Iraq had its share of destruction during the perpetual war years, and as agricultural productivity drastically fell, Iraq became totally dependent on imports of agricultural products. Therefore, the Iraqi economy had already been wreckage when the military mission of allied forces against Iraq started in March 03.

Challenges and Opportunities of the Post war Iraq

When the military mission of allied forces officially came to an end in May 03, the need for political and economic reforms was an obvious urgency for Iraq. The damage done to the country also needed to be undone. The first priority in the reconstruction of Iraq was given to institution building and establishing sovereign power (The Economist, 19 April 03: 17) rather than any direct economic action.

Iraq has one major advantage in the post war reconstruction. Despite the approximately $370 billion worth of war reparations of Iraq, and the need of at least $35.6 billion for the next 3 years (Holmstrom, 2003: 2) to reconstruct its heavily damaged infrastructure, Iraq does not have to rely on foreign aid as any other country might have to. Its vast oil resources can be sufficient to finance restructuring of the country without foreign aid (ibid: 9). However, managing of the fund- generating oil became an urgent matter when the mission ended. Putting the management of oil under the custody of a supranational committee rather than the trusteeship of the US was suggested. Unfortunately, none of the regional countries like Egypt and Turkey took part among the custodians

to represent the best interest of Iraq. Among other suggestions, selling the Iraqi oil sector to the highest bidder in an auction was another idea (ibid: 19). Mass privatization without letting foreign companies getting involved in the process could have eased the tension of the post-war unrest. However, without the initial macro economic reforms, that became a dead option too. The rescheduling of the Iraqi debt became extremely important for two reasons: first to manage the country's oil reserves to meet the needs of its people; and to manage its oil sector, so that the war-reparation bill of Iraq is undertaken upon a reset calendar. The problem has still not yet been solved completely.

There was an urgency to redefine the Iraqi monetary denomination so that transactions start without delay. The macro economic aspect of the reconstruction began with the empowerment of the Iraqi monetary authority and proceeded with considerations of what kind of exchange arrangements would be more beneficial for Iraq so that a currency crisis, and confusion are avoided and/ or currency substitution could take place with greater efficiency.

Iraq has a major disadvantage in the reconstruction process. The post war Iraq is not exactly another post war Japan. The major difference between the two countries lies in the human capital stock to start with. The lack of basic intellectual skill, knowledge, and institutions set major impediments for Iraq to internalize its own reconstruction efforts. Therefore, beyond resuming of the peace and order, and controlling of crime and terror in the country, human resources cannot support restructuring, as the country's education system needs restructuring of its own.

Basic Needs of the Post War Iraq

Aside for the macro economic, institutional and legal musts there are 14 specified key areas to rebuild Iraq. These areas include telecommunications, electricity and water supply. So far as the immediate reconstruction needs of Iraq are concerned the following are urgently indicated (Holmstrom, op.cit:2).

- Electricity system: $12 billion
- Water and sanitation:$6 billion
- Education:$4.8 billion

- Telecom and transport:$ 3.4 billion
- Agriculture:$3.0 billion
- Housing and urban development:$1.8 billion
- Health:$1.6 billion
- Police:$5 billion
- Environment:$3.5 billion
- Oil industry:$8 billion

Considering the fact that the reconstruction needs cannot be met unless oil sector is reconstructed, the participants of the Madrid Donor Conference pledged the following amounts of donations to Iraq in October 2003:

United States: $18.4 billion; Japan: $1.5 billion in 2004 and $3.5 billion in loans between 2005 and 2007; World Bank $3-5 billion in loans over the next 5 years; IMF: $2.5-4.25 billion in loans in the next 3 years; the EU: $812 million in 2004; Kuwait: $500 million; Spain $300 million until 2007; South Korea: $200 million until 2007; UAE: $215 million; China: $24.2 million; Slovakia: $290 thousand. As one can easily see neither Turkey nor Egypt are among the donor countries (ibid: 3).

Beyond the macroeconomic stabilization of the Iraqi economy and the reconstruction of its basic infrastructure needs, Iraq urgently needs job creation for its people. Unfortunately, unemployment remains to be the main source of many problems in Iraq. Although the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) allegedly created 165.000 jobs since 2003, and it still is planning to create an additional 100.000 jobs by May 2004 (Altaie, 2003:2) the need for jobs is likely to exceed what is being offered.

The Role Egypt and Turkey in Post War Iraqi Reconstruction

Neither Egypt, nor Turkey took part in the military intervention to Iraq. In fact Turkey's legislative authority chose to disapprove the option of taking part in the Iraqi military operation at the expense of creating friction with its important ally; the US. Egypt and Turkey did not donate any funding facility for Iraq in the Madrid Donor's

conference either. Therefore, the de facto condition of the two countries automatically disqualified them from taking part in the reconstruction process of Iraq unless the CPA makes special offers to them. This does not however prevent Egypt and Turkey to normalize trade relations with Iraq. In fact, Turkey's exports to Iraq reached $200 million in 2003 (DEİK, 2003). However, trading with Iraq is costly for Turkish firms, since Iraq imposes upon additional charges at the border crossing from Habur (ibid). The Kirkuk-Yumurtalik pipeline, the annual capacity of which is 70.9 million metric tones have been in operation again since June 2003(TOBB, 2003:29). This is an important step forward for normalizing the relationship between Turkey and Iraq. The railroad services between Turkey and Iraq have already resumed their normal schedule as well (ibid: 28). Turkey provides health services to Iraqi patients and 35% of all oil for food (OFF) scheme is procured from Turkey (ibid: 28), and Egypt gives training to the Iraqi medical personnel in Cairo hospitals.

However, so far as taking part in the infrastructure and investment projects are concerned, unfortunately Turkey missed opportunities of getting shares of the $18.6 billion project tender, which is opened by the CPA (http://ydmh.foreigntrade.gov.tr). The same is true for Egypt. Although Egypt and Turkey are among the 64 countries, which are allowed to participate in tenders, most privileges have already been granted to the Saudi and the Kuwaiti companies (TOBB, 2003). Iraqi sectors under reconstruction are in the oil, building, transport and communication, water, electricity, and security sectors. Despite the difficulties some Turkish companies are already in Iraq, either working as sub-contractors, which undertake activities of local firms, or undertaking construction projects on their own. Güray Insaat, a Turkish construction firm completed the reconstruction of the Baghdad International Airport (ibid). Other Turkish companies got involved with reconstruction of hospitals, construction of luncheons, launderettes, repair work, and garbage collection (ibid).

Turkey and Egypt are in close geographic proximity to Iraq. However, neither country fully takes advantage of its location. For one thing the establishment of economic relations has prerequisites. Additionally, neither of the two countries' companies have the entrepreneurial abilities to face the fierce competition of the French, the

English, and the Norwegian companies to undertake many of the infrastructure investments including the oil exploration projects. Small and medium scale firms of Egypt and Turkey, which are mostly in retailing, textiles and food related production seem to hold better chances in Iraq since they display cultural affinity with Iraqi way of doing business.

For Egyptian and Turkish entrepreneurs who take the risk of following a long term mission and bare relatively high operating costs, there will always opportunities in Iraq. Micro-lending needs of local Iraqi enterprises can also be partially met by the Turkish and the Egyptian financial intermediaries with or without guarantees of their respective governments.

Concluding Remarks

The post war Iraq is still in a political turmoil. When this fact is coupled by economic uncertainty, Iraq promises to be a place, which has more challenges than opportunities. In fact, many opportunities may be lost or sacrificed to challenges imposed by the existing disorder. Iraq seems to have a long way to go with reforms and reconstruction before its economy start functioning again. The immediate repair work must be done to let the oil flow through the regular and/or alternative pipelines, so that the country must have easy access to its most natural financial possibilities. Skill building for the Iraqi people and development of other possible economic activities can only resume its normal course if peace and order are resumed in the country.

Foreign ministers of Syria, Saudi Arabia, Iran, Egypt, Turkey, Jordan and Kuwait convened in Kuwait to discuss matters that raise concern for all countries in the neighborhood in February 2004. All participants agreed that the state of instability in Iraq adversely affects the region as a whole. However, the political upheaval and the ethnic violence in an invaded and almost divided country like Iraq cannot be easily stopped by any country in the region individually or in cooperation with others.

In this paper my objective was to find out weather Egypt and Turkey hold any chance to help reconstruct the Iraqi economy at all. It is my contention that Turkey and Egypt, together or individually do not hold much of a chance to help Iraq to reconstruct. For one thing they

neither participated in the military mission against the Saddam regime, nor did they take part in the Madrid Donor Club to help Iraq financially. They may increase and normalize their trade connections with it as time progresses or as the allied powers and the CPA wish to do procurements for Iraq from Egypt and Turkey. If time work in favor of peace in Iraq, Egypt and Turkey hold a good chance to increase their economic relations with that country because prior to the war, both Egypt and Turkey had been among the most important trade partners of Iraq.

However, if some private entrepreneurs in both Egypt and Turkey can bare the risk of initiating business in Iraq to create jobs, that may be a significant contribution. Beyond this, Egypt and Turkey may still hold some chances in the post war Iraq in the area of investment. Construction sector is one area where firms of both countries may gain access to sub-contracting. Health and education services in Iraq may go on benefiting from the support and involvement of Turkish and Egyptian public and private health and education services. Turkey and Egypt may hold better chances in Iraq when SMEs and service sectors are concerned. But for involvement in large and mega scale projects Turkish and Egyptian public and /or private entrepreneurs can only enjoy what may be offered them by other countries including China and Japan.

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DISCUSSIONS

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Associate Professor- Middle East Technical University

I have few questions for Dr. Ahmed Abdel Halim:

First, concerning what you said about the Gaza strip and the Israeli unilateral withdrawal, did Egypt officially ask for the renegotiation of the treaty between Israel and Egypt? Second, there is news about Israel offering Egypt control over Gaza, is that true? and what was the Egyptian response to that? Third, it is interesting what you said about Turkey and its role in the post war US plan towards the Middle East because in the debates about Turkey there are many question marks regarding to what extend Turkey fits in this model, and about the affect of what happens to Iraqi territories and integrity on Turkey. You seem to be certain about a specific Turkish role in this US policy. I believe that you have something else in mind other than just talking about the Turkish political and economic experience and that being discussed as a possible model for political and economic transformation in the region.

Dr. Ahmed Abdel Halim

Concerning Gaza and whether we requested a meeting with the Israelis, this is something that has been discussed between President Mubarak and Shimon Peres- who happened to be the Minister of Foreign Affairs then- and actually there has been voices coming from Washington saying that this issue should be clarified.

I don't know more than that but what I am sure about is that we refused the Israeli request to have Gaza under our control. This was not the first time the Israelis raise this issue, years ago they offered us Gaza. It is a problem for them but we refused because we are abiding by the article in the agreement that lays out the boarders between Egypt and Israel. These are the boarders that have been drafted by the British, so Gaza is out of question and we are not going to take more responsibilities.

At the same time diplomats may have heard the Egyptian President and the Minister of Foreign Affairs saying that we are going to defend the boarders of Egypt whatever it takes. Now, I am trying to explain what

was meant by"whatever it takes", it means resisting the concept of the new Palestine State that Sharon is putting under the table and that's why I say: they should withdraw unilaterally without modifying articles in the agreement. I remember meeting a Turk working at the Head Court in the NATO in Brussels. He told me that we have relation with Israel and the US, but if the United States will ever allow the creation of a Kurdish state we are going to oppose the United States of America. That is the same as what I am saying here, we are going to defend our boarder whatever it takes.

Concerning the Turkish role, we are waiting for three events to unfold in June 2004: the Georgia meeting for the eight, the meeting between the United States and Britain, and the NATO summit in Istanbul. I am really concerned about the NATO meeting since it will dictate some missions to the local and domestic armies. Yet there is some kind of resistance to the US by some of its European allies. A few weeks ago I attended a meeting and I have listened to European representatives telling the American representative that we are not going to join the coalition and we are not going to support you as long as you work alone and you should know that no country in the whole world can achieve its political objective by its own forces even the United States of America. The strange thing was the response from the American side stating that their alliance is not in Europe but in the Middle East.

Dr. Amr Darag:
Vice president of the association of Cairo University professors

Dr. Hassan Abou-Taleb, you talked about the problem of the reconstruction of a unified Iraq and you referred to the acts of the resistance as violence. On the other hand you referred to the resistance as a right for the people to resist any occupation, which means that there is some sort of contradiction. What if the real acts of resistance in the face of the occupation lead to problems for the reconstruction of a new unified Iraq? How do you evaluate the whole situation?

The other question for Ambassador. Murat Bilhan: when you talked about the Kurdish problem- and obviously this is a major problem for Turkey- how does this affect the strategic relationship between Turkey and the United States?

Dr. Pakinam El Sharkawy
Lecturer of Political Science- Faculty of Economics and Political Science, Cairo University

Thanks for all the presentations they were all very clear. I will pick out from the four presentations three general remarks:

First: what type of reconstruction are we talking about; we are constructing what; according to which model and by whom?

Second: the link between military, political and the economic aspects of the construction. We are talking about a situation where there is military occupation in a land and at the same time we are talking about how to draw a political framework in Iraq as a state. Also we are talking about the economic side and the real relation and impact of the political on the economic dimension. So, the dilemma in the Iraqi situation is from where do we start. Should we start from the political or from the economic part and could we go through the two dimensions similtaniously?

Third: concerning the role of both Turkey and Egypt: the presentations have widely expressed the Turkish role, but what about Egypt and its regional role.

I will also add some questions:

First: Dr. Ahmed Abdel-Halim said that the United States has no intention now to go through another military mission, but what do you think about Syria and Iran? And what time are we talking about: long, medium, or short run? Because when we can see the pressure done by the United States on Syria and Iran using different cards starting from the Kurdish card in Syria, the card of weapons of mass destruction and the nature of the internal political situation and following the same scenario that happened in Iraq I can figure out that the same is now applied on the level of the two mentioned countries maybe in a different way but with the same logic.

Second: Concerning the resistant movement in Iraq, it is said that this is the doings of the mafia or radical Islamic groups but what about the leftist?

Third: about Iraqi integrity, an important problem that face the reconstruction of Iraq. What about the role of Shiites? Do they consider a

role of separation or of independence? And what about the relation with Iran?

A Turkish Participant(name not defined):

I have a question for Dr. Hassan Abou-Taleb about the resistance in Iraq; we heard from some experts that Israeli hands are behind what is happening in Iraq now. Bush once said that our coalition is strong and we will finish what we began but now the coalition is collapsing therefore I want to ask about the future of the American president

Dr. Meliha Altunisk-
Associate Professor- Middle East Technical University

A question for Ambassador Murat Bilhan: How do you see the relation between the stance of the Turkish formal base towards the Kurdish dilemma and between the type of democratic operation within Turkey, because many questioned the Turkish response towards the American policy concerning this issue within the new future of Iraq.

Ambassador. Murat Bilhan
Chairman of the Center for Strategic Research (SAM)

I just want to make a small remark concerning the Kurdish question because this was too much emphasized on especially when people say this is a Turkish problem since it is not a "Turkish problem" and I would like to underline that. It is a regional problem and it affects the whole region. Mostly it is an Iranian problem, as well as a Turkish, Syrian, and Iraqi problem. Although there is some kind of entity, which is trying to become a state through force, it will not have a chance for survival despite that it might be supported by external forces because such an entity cannot live in such a hostile environment. Although it might be in the interest of Israel to create such an entity, but then there are also some 150 thousand Kurdish who are Jewish. Still people mention it as being a Turkish problem; it is not a Turkish problem I want to underline that.

Now, the Kurds in Turkey are given all solutions and chances in a democratic state and in no other countries where Kurds live do they have such chances.

A Turkish participant:(name not defined)

We Turks don't follow a dictated model and we never made a model out of ourselves. It is a market economy but it has its own problems and internal, external and micro constrains and we do not intend to be a role model. If any of the Middle East states try to adopt the market mechanism that would be their own leadership under the super national authority like the G8 or any other.

A Turkish participant: :(name not defined)

About the American administration and the Iraqi issue, the new presidential democratic candidate, John Kerry aims to give money to the Iraqi operation and that does not differ a lot from the stance of the current administration. In my own opinion, the United States will seek an international organization -and that is the NATO- to undertake the responsibilities- like it did in Afghanistan- of managing the operation in Iraq including the disarmament operations. The US did the same thing in Balkan states, it managed the operation and it gave the disarmament role to the OCE The same thing occurred in Afghanistan but the disarmament was given to the NATO. That is why the NATO summit is very important since it will be invited to enter Iraq.

Concerning the question about the Kurdish problem: it has two dimensions: one is internal and the other is external. First concerning the internal dimension, the Kurds have the same rights as the Turks since we are relatives and they are not a minority in Turkey. The minorities are only in numbers such as Jews, Greece, etc. We have a Kurdish party president, military staff, chief of parliament, parliament speakers, prime minister etc. Although they had some discontents concerning some cultural rights like the language etc.. but with the European Union, Turkey mainly resolved this problem. Now Kurds can speak the Kurdish language everywhere, they can learn Kurdish in language courses, publish in Kurdish, sing in Kurdish, make films etc.. and we even can listen to Kurdish music.

The external dimension is linked with the political situation in Turkey. The PKK operation lie in Turkey and Iraq. And Turkey tries to eliminate the PKK terrorists to prevent them from what they did 15 years when some thousand Turkish citizens were killed.

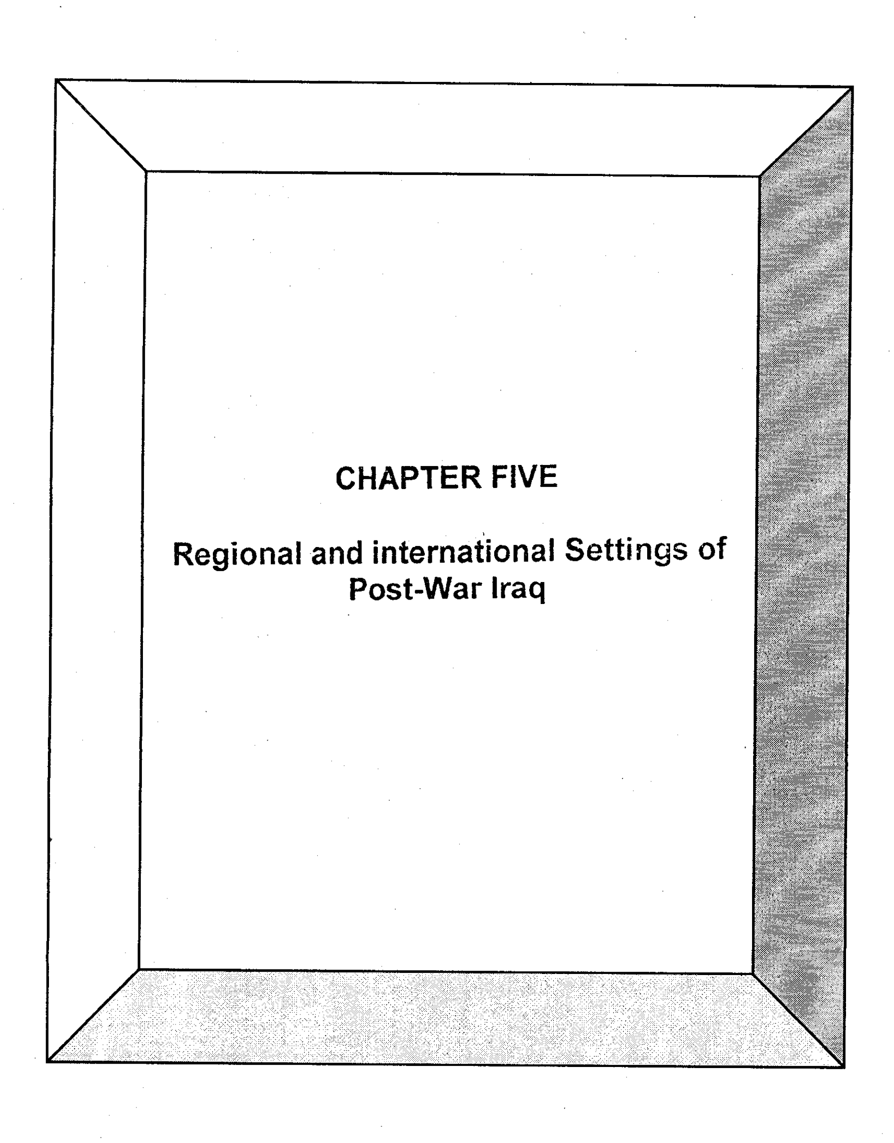
Dr. Hassan Abou-Taleb:

Concerning the question of reconstruction, with what means and by whom? In short answer, this is an American plan. In the United Nations literature we always differentiate between nation building and rebuilding regime. What is happening now in Iraq is a mixture between rebuilding nation and rebuilding regime. And this is an obstacle in the international regime. So, this is an American model.

My second remark is about the resistance: yes, resistance is a disputed right for any nation under occupation. But if there are different groups, which are getting more violent in the name of resistance against occupation then we must differentiate between violence and resistance to get a chance to continue the real resistance towards the occupation.

About the Kurdish problem, this is a regional problem, but if we look at the new Iraqi case, now they are given more rights than in any other countries such as Syria or Iran: they have their own language now as the second language, the right to put their militias troops, the right to vote on any law or amendment to the next coming permanent constitution.

About the Egyptian position: Egypt and Turkey face the same problem not only on the economic level, but also on the strategic level, because if Iraq is to be divided this will create a major strategic problem for Turkey and Egypt. So it is in our common interest to work together to keep it as a unified country.



CHAPTER FIVE

Regional and international Settings of Post-War Iraq

Major Powers and Post War Iraq[*]

Dr. Mostafa Elwy[**]

Let me begin my presentation by congratulating the Center for Political Research and Studies at Cairo University and the Center for Strategic Research in Turkey for convening this symposium and I think we, the Egyptians and Turks, are in great need of such a gathering in order to exchange views and to reach an understanding that both countries -as strategically significant regional powers- deserve. Also I would like to thank my college Dr. Nadia Mostafa- the Director of the Center for Political Research and Studies - for inviting me to take part in this symposium.

The topic of my presentation is:" Major Powers and the Post War Iraq". There are two possible approaches to this topic: the first one is an actor-oriented approach and the second is an issue-oriented approach. I think one has to combine these two approaches together to see the interaction between the actor oriented and the issue oriented approach in studying such a significant topic.

Concerning the action oriented approach, if one has to name the major powers she or he will find that on top of the international system there is a superpower which is now obviously the United States and a number of major powers or big powers -which are not necessarily a state actor but a non-state actor-; and they are the rest of the four permanent members of the Security Council along with the EU - - in addition to Japan. These are the major powers on the international scene.

In terms of the issues approach, there are three very serious issues in post war Iraq, first: the issue of safety and security, second: the issue of reconstruction and economic development, third: the issue of the rebuilding of the state or the political process within Iraq in the post war era.

[*] Transcript of the presentation given by Dr Mostafa Elwy

[**] Professor of Political Science-Faculty of Economics and Political Science, Cairo University

We all noticed that the United States is a major power or player in the Iraqi scene after the war. All other major powers -some are in close allies with the United States, others have different views and positions.

Yet when it comes to the efficiency of the policies of the other major powers, I think one has to put a big question mark. Let us begin our analysis with the other major powers and end by the United States in addressing the post war Iraqi issues.

Let me begin with the European Union. The EU is economically a major power; it is a very powerful actor when it comes to the economic aspect of the game. Yet the European Union is politically divided, and I believe that the political divisions within the EU will increase with the joining of the new ten member states on the 1st May 2004. The division inside the EU was very obvious during the war on Iraq itself. We had two different camps within the EU, the first camp led by France and Germany, the second camp led by the UK and Italy who are very close allies of the United States.

Ofcourse we might have seen very recently some signs of fraction in the international coalition led by the United States and here one has to refer to the Spanish Prime Minister who has based his decision to pull out the Spanish forces from Iraq on the transfer of authority and sovereignty is completed on the 1st of July 2004 and the United Nations taking over on the military level from the United States. Militarily, the withdrawal of the Spanish forces from Iraq has only a symbolic impact on post war Iraq, because the number of Spanish troops in Iraq is only 12 hundred. Yet politically, it will have a much more important impact on what is going inside Iraq, because the Spanish decision has triggered responses by the Polish that were unexpected. The Polish president came out in the response of the Spanish move with a statement that he was misled by the United States during the war on Iraq and that he might recalculate the presence of polish forces in Iraq. Therefore, there are some signs of possible fraction taking place within the European Union.

Perhaps more significantly, the popular movements and street demonstrations against the US role inside Iraq that we have seen on the first anniversary of the US occupation in Iraq a few days ago in large number of capital cities in Europe is also another sign of possible fractions within the international US led coalition that is working in Iraq.

Of course till now, France and Germany have pursued a firm policy of not taking part in all security restoration efforts inside Iraq, this is because their position during the war and in the pre-war era was completely neglected and ignored by the United States. Ironically, the US is asking the two countries to contribute significantly to the reconstruction and economic development efforts inside Iraq including the reduction or even the writing off the Iraqi debt to these countries. Here there is an irony in the US stance. The USA would like to have all the international community contributes to the reconstruction efforts by writing off the debts but not to participate in the reconstruction operations itself.

So, the US is trying to monopolies all economic transactions of the reconstruction effort for American firms and companies. Yet the French and German positions remains very clear not to send any troops to Iraq in the post- war era. Perhaps the Germans have softened their position on the possible role of NATO which was called upon by the US to take part in the restoration of security inside Iraq beginning from the July 1st 2004 when the sovereignty and authority are transferred to the Iraqi's then the NATO will be called upon by the US to take over because America would like to pull out its forces from the big urban centers to a number of military bases in Iraq and to reach some sort of agreement between two sovereign states , the USA and Iraq, in order to have the UN take over the peacekeeping mission which is the most difficult.

The United Nations will take over the peacekeeping mission, which is the most difficult and problematic issue in the post-war Iraq. Having the US enjoy its significant military presence without having to encounter national Iraqi resistant movement has so far caused a large number of causalities on the American forces part in Iraq.

Russia might be interested in taking part in the reconstruction efforts within Iraq to serve economic interests. But Russia is facing serious domestic problems. Politically and economically Russia is a country recipient of foreign assistance from the US, the EU and Japan and that is why it can not be a strong country as it used to be in the second half of the 20th century thus the affect of Russian policy on postwar Iraq is minimal.

Japan is a very close ally to the United States, it gives its full support to the USA in all fields of life at all times. China is a major power, but it is not an influential political power in the Middle East including Iraq. It enjoys a trade surplus with the US reaching $103 billion a year therefore, I think China is not ready to sacrifice its economic interests with the US for the sake of the Iraqis. The maximum we can accept from China is to pursue a neutral policy towards whatever positions that are problematic or controversial between the US and other major powers. It is important to note that China and the four permanent members in the Security Council have approved all of the councils resolutions passed in the post-war era regarding Iraq whether on reconstruction policies, establishment of Iraq's economic development fund where the US is the sole player in all fields especially security and rebuilding of the state.

The major problem facing the USA in post-war Iraq is the security problem. The US was forced to dismantle the Iraqi army and police force. The difficulties' facing the US is that: in the Sunni triangle there is a mounting resistant and terrorist movement. The US forces are unable to put an end neither to the national resistance nor to the terrorist acts that are taking place in Iraq. I think this problem will increase, because the coming month will be very influential in the US presidential election campaign and I think the resistant movements will escalate their operations and acts of violence. Now the US is trying to rebuild the police force and an Iraqi army. The hardship is that the U.S would like to have a small army and a medium size police force yet it cannot establish a big Iraqi army nor a big police force. This is a dilemma for the US in Iraq because it has no assurance that a big army and police force will not join ranks with the national resistance movement in the future. Ofcourse other major powers are still refraining from taking part in any actions aiming at improving and storing their national security.

The last point I would like to make concerns the Iraqi state remaking process that is led by only the U.S.A. There is a date for the transfer of power but the problem is that it will remain a formal political act that will not result in any major change in the political process within Iraq, because the transfer of sovereignty, power and responsibilities will be given to the interim government council or the expanded version of the ruling council. This council is appointed by the occupation force thus

not representing the political will of the Iraqi people and it lacks the political legitimacy needed to have a solid base for rebuilding the Iraqi state. From a political point of view there are many others problems in the process of remaking the Iraqi state by the US: the kind of federalism whether it will be geographical or sectarianism, the autonomy or independence that is to be given to the Kurdish provinces, the American attitude towards Islam and Islamic jurisprudence, the legislative process of Iraq in post-war Iraq. These deficiencies are present in the interim constitution that was passed.

When they USA found out that it is difficult to establish a new political model to be emulated by other countries in the Middle East introduced the new Greater Middle East initiative in order to broaden the geographical scope of action and reduce the relative weight of the proper Middle Eastern countries in saying no to any of these initiatives and to build a global coalition that will adopt such an initiative because the sole sponsorship of the USA of such initiatives insures the out of hand rejection by many powers, classes and political forces inside the Middle East countries. With this remark I conclude my speech.

War in Iraq: a passive regional context

Dr. Pakynam El Sharkawy*

The war in Iraq is not considered a regional crisis but mainly an international one because of both the involvement of the American super power but more it is considered to be a real test of the new international system: its values, goals and mechanisms. What are the major variables governing the regional responses towards the Iraqi crisis? Is there a common regional attitude during this war? If yes, what are its main features? What are the related issues raised? These are the questions that the paper will try to present some answer for it but first some general observations have to be mentioned:

- The Middle East is passing through a real turning point. The region – as a whole – is threatened by the strategies of the sole super power. It is not just Iraq, but all analyses point to the general defeat felt and to the structural weakness emphasized on. The interrelationship between regional crises is strongly noticed for example in Afghanistan and Palestine. Different types of crisis and levels of interference are widespread.

- The international factor gains an extremely increased weight in explaining the course of events, its consequences and the regional responses. Some argue that the greater the big power, the stronger the reactions of the regional powers to this penetration. This is not the case for Middle East in this current stage. The region continues to be an essential place to test new international balances. We could add other regional inputs that characterize this part of the world: the lack of will and resources to resist the impacts of the external strategies planed by the major force and especially of course The United States of America. On the other hand, the American targets and tools became more direct and decisive. The strategic plans have been announced without any coverage: to adjust the military balances and the cultural, economic and political systems.

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* **Lecturer of Political Science- Faculty of Economics and Political Science, Cairo University**

Concerning the diverse tools used by the Americans, the military intervention has transformed to be a frequent, more accepted and easily decided mean. This trend has been called "militarization of American foreign policy". Both goals and ways serve the American War against terrorism, which represent the new big justified idea for seeking American power and interests.

- The relation with U.S was a governing factor in shaping the stance of the regional actors and mainly to constrain any opposition –if any - into the diplomatic field. The national interest of every state seems to be threatened deeply if the attitude over-passes a limited formal denial. Countries of the region had been liberated from Saddam's threat but they have constrained themselves with very strong alliance with U.S in different degrees.

The paper will try to explore the regional context not relying only on different regional actors stance but using issues criteria for analysis too because it has an important significance today in order to specify the current new issues or approaches compared with the old ones thus this will help the readers discover the regional context on the formal and informal level and to predict the challenges that will face the region in the future. A new reading of the regional agenda and its priorities had to be done. The American War in Iraq is a perfect example to accomplish these targets especially that it plays a crucial role in showing and not creating the problems of the region.

The paper will be divided to two main parts. The first will deal with the Middle East actor's stance (Arabic and Muslim states) towards the Iraqi crisis during its different phases mainly in the post war era-. While the second will present an overview of the regional responses towards the major issues raised as challenges that faces the region (like democracy and weapons of mass destruction). All of these problems have been related to the Iraqi dilemma by making what had been (or will be) done in the Iraqi arena a model for the entire region to follow.

A- Regional actors and a cooperative context:

Most of the countries in the region began to deal with current situation as a fact that we have to minimize its losses as much as possible. Even the states that had adopted the opposition stance had accepted the war and its consequences. For example the assistance provided to the U.S operations

had become less sensitive and easier to admit. Even the countries, which adopted a conservative stance toward the American role in the region and in the current international system in general pursued a balanced opposition in which they prevent any provocative action or the escalation of tension with the U.S.

Iran represents a model for this balanced behavior in which the Iranian state provided the U.S.A with a minimal degree of cooperation in its war in Afghanistan and Iraq (specially the South Shiite) without loosing all of its influence.

Several actors have chosen to cooperate with U.S under a variety of excuses: the protection of the national interest that is widely connected to the course of events within Iraq (especially neighboring countries) and minimizing the losses as much as possible.

In post Iraq war, a general regional trend towards providing endorsement for the transitional Iraqi council and to help facilitate its mission until the final transfer of political power will be accomplished. Many regional conferences were held in this context especially between the neighboring countries: Istanbul, Riyad and Damasous.

Safeguarding the Iraqi territories integration, establishing an Iraqi representative government, strengthening the role of U.N, and the withdrawal of the occupation forces were the major accepted goals for all regional actors.

Despite the common features of passiveness and different degrees of cooperation that characterized the regional responses, we could analytically distinct between Arab actors and Muslim ones: mainly Iran and Turkey (if we want to confine the Middle East region to its core circles). As for Israel, it cannot fit in either group. So the paper will discuss briefly, the principle features of its stance, especially that the Israeli discourse and policies were in perfect harmony with the American strategy in Iraq, so it was a more clear and direct stance to analyze in the region. While other actors had to pursue big efforts to balance between the international, regional and domestic factors.

- The Israeli stance:

Israel was the main regional actor that was able to seize gains: destroying not only the Iraqi weapons of mass destruction but more

importantly to exclude Iraq from the map of states that could pose any military threat, changing Saddam regime and establishing a more friendly system which could easily endorse the results of any future peace agreement. Furthermore, post war Iraqi regime could participate in solving one of the big problems confronting Israel on the long run: the refugee problem.[1]

The new regional balance- after excluding a big power like Iraq from "the enemies camp" -present a huge victory for Israel and it will help in the containment of states like Iran and Syria.

Meanwhile Israel still has some fears from facing increased American pressures towards two issues: its weapons of mass destruction and reaching a peace agreement with Palestinians based on the road map. These expected pressures would be initiated from the American embarrassment in front of its Arab allies and from the need to partially satisfy and compensate them (like in post second gulf war era). But in the end, those fears are still considered marginalized in comparison with the enormous gains achieved by Israel in this current phase.

Within this weak regional context and the endorsement of U.S, Israel had less constraints and obstacles in calculating its decisions. Further, with Sharon leadership, we could easily expect this extreme hostile and aggressive policies adopted towards Palestinians and this rigid stance towards peace process negotiations not just on the Palestinian course but Syrian and Lebanese courses as well.

The Arabic Stance. Lack of efficiency:

A general trend of formal refusal exists in the Arab region, but it stopped at the level of diplomatic statements. With few exceptions (Kuwait), this refusal can be classified in different degrees. Beside, the Arab governments consent on the Saddam's unwise and insufficient administration of this crisis. Most of the Arab diplomatic statements blame the Iraqi regime more than the rigid American attitude as the main reason for the escalation of the crisis.

The Arabic stance before and during the war was so slow: for example, no Arabic leaders summit was held to discuss the American threat towards Iraq. In addition, it represents a divided situation that lacks any efficiency. Several Arab states did provide the U.S with different

types of assistance ignoring the decisions of the ministerial Arab summit, which had forbidden any "participation". Beside many argue (especially American officials) the Arabs duality between what is accepted in closed rooms and what is announced. Thus the formal Arabic stance looses all its influence and credibility.[2] For example the decision of the Arab league council in 22-24 March was very positive: condemning the American-British aggression on Iraq, considering this act a violation of the UN charter and international principles, demanding a complete withdrawal, not participating in any military action against Iraq, working on holding a special session in the security council to take the necessary decisions, and if not addressing the general assembly. On the diplomatic level, it is a very solid and positive decision but again on the level of implementation or follow up there is a lack of efficiency.

The war on Iraq had exposed the big distortion and inefficiency in the Arab system and its institutions. The division between the Arab states had been increased and exceeded. Despite the collective weak passive attitude of the Arab states, the differences appeared between whom accept to play a more cooperative role with U.S military forces and those who prefer to keep their silence and formal disapproval. Even with the efforts of Arab reconciliation in the last two years, the structural weakness remains the same in the Arab system: lack of leadership, vulnerability in the relationship with the international context. So any country that intends to adopt opposition policies against the American plans will not find any support from its regional system. In consequences the actor's calculations were based on national self-interest. Thus, this could interpret the weak regional refusal in front of the American war in Iraq.[3]

Concerning the relations with U.S, we could make a distinction between three categories of states: the first one depends directly on US to preserve its security based on known agreement for defense and other purposes. The second type depends in less degree on some American aids in the economic and military fields. The third group of states does not depend on American support. Despite these differentiations, the stance of second and third categories of states did not differ from the policies and attitudes of the first group of states because of the economic and political vulnerabilities of all. While the states with close relationship with the U.S did not want to loose the American support, the others believe that the

new American strategy towards the region will be pursued by all means and could go so far. The only distinction that could be made is the facilities given to U.S military forces, while the rest of the states maintained their silence or just confused stance.[4]

Every state in the Arab world built its definition of the crisis, the right solutions and the suitable means for each phase depending on the type of its relation with the American super power. A big difference can be notice between the Syrian and Egyptian discourses handling the Iraqi crisis but on the level of policies and conducts. Syria had seen the Iraqi crisis as a proof of the American intention to control the world, to change the region map and a consequence of the American Israeli alliance. But despite this revolutionary reading of the regional situation, we found Syria responding to several American demands in the post war era like closing the offices of Hamas at Damascus or trying to prove its close and tight supervision on the borders, meanwhile the Americans had issued laws and expending sanctions against Syria. President Bashar keeps trying to minimize the effects of these steps on Syria.

A gap exists between the formal stance of most of the Arab states and its followed policies. Away from this debate concerning the right definition of "the participation actions" in the war, Kuwait was the sole country possessing high degree of stimulation between its declared statements and actual policies. In addition, the terminologies of aggression, condemning the invasion and the necessity of the immediate withdrawal of the occupation forces had disappeared from the diplomatic discourse of each state. After the occupation of Iraq and the increased American threats to other regional actors, a climate of wisdom, patient, realism and delicate calculations dominates the regional responses. Most of the Arab states deal with the American occupation as a given fact and ordinary actual situation, even some Arab officials goes further and argued that keeping American forces is necessary for Iraqis stability. On the other hand, several Arab actors in the so-called "the front of extreme Arab diplomacy against the American policies" showed more and more flexibility in their adjustment with the new regional variables and began to respond in a relative positive way to the American demands. So, the Arabic stance is characterized by a huge gape between action and discourse, between the collective stance and the national one and it goes quickly towards accepting the new current regional situation. Resisting

the American plans will be transferred to political and intellectual elites but again on this level we could witness the same gap between opinion and behavior in the stance of the Arab streets and the civil societies with ambiguity and ineffectively.[5]

Arab regional mechanisms loose much of its significance, and the regional actors had recurred more often to the international diplomatic means. The International organizations like the UN had turn to be a basic arena for Arab claims. So, even on the level of tools used, the international level gains superiority over the regional organizations. Thus, the regional inputs turns to be behind national priority and international superiority.

In the post war era, all the Arab states gathered around some legitimate aims that are widely accepted, but without making real big efforts to reach it. Many Arab countries like Egypt deal with the American presence as "an occupation authorities" that have to safeguard security and order under the Geneva agreements, but it is only a transnational phase and must lead to the transfer of power to the Iraqi people as soon as possible. The next Iraqi regime must represent all the Iraqi people.

We can rank the economic aspects of Iraq after the war on the top of the Arab diplomatic agenda and of the practical steps taken. The reconstruction phase in post war era gained a lot of attention from the Arab states especially in the eastern part, and on the top is Egypt and Lebanon and Jordan regarding the frequencies of official and economic delegations going or discussing various field of reconstructing Iraq. For example: Egypt had negotiated the reconstruction efforts in Iraq on different levels: Arabic, European, Japanese and American. Egyptian government is trying to develop cooperation with different partners regarding this issue. Already Egypt had made several contacts with the Iraqi council to offers all help possible and the cooperation had begun with the training of Iraqi police forces.[6]

Another crucial dilemma appears on the surface: the widening gap between the Arab regimes and the Arab streets in which a more enthusiastic refusal dominate the feeling. In this climate, the Arab regimes feel they need to be very careful about their support for the United States and its policies that are unpopular with their people.[7]

Eastern Arab states prove to be more related and interested than Arab western states in the Iraqi crisis in all the phases. In states like Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia, we could witness a retreat in the attention and efforts given to the situation in Iraq. The internal problems are always located on the top of these countries agenda. As for Libya, a close relation had been made between its last cooperative attitude concerning the weapons of mass destruction and the American policy toward Saddam Hussein regime under the pretext of issuing this kind of destructive programs.

- **Turkey and Iran stances, some similarities**:

Again the relation with U.S played the most important variable in shaping the attitude of countries towards war in Iraq: either to keep close strategic relations or to prevent any serious clashes. Having negative or positive relations with U.S does not really make a big difference; Muslim actors put increasing weight to the American power and its new orientation in their decision calculations.

Turkey and Iran are key actors in the regional context of the Iraqi crisis not only due to their geographical neighborhood but to their specific location in the international system as a whole and their delicate relation with U.S (one as an important regional ally, other as member in the "axis of evil").

- The Turkish response:

During all phases of the crisis, the government of justice and development party emphasized on its respect for the principle constants of the Turkish model: secularism internally and the western orientation externally. Any negotiations between the Turks and the Americans were held around the tools and limits of the cooperative role of Turkey, not contesting its nature or orientation. The exchange of visits and meetings was an arena for the Turkish government to reach the best terms and minimizing losses especially the economic ones, knowing that the third Gulf war will approximately cost the Turkish budget around 10 to 12 billion dollars. Thus, the crisis was an occasion to fix an accepted agenda between the two strategic allies: Turkey and U.S in a way in order to reduce any differences that could appear in the future.

The war in Iraq was a real test of the solid relation between the two countries. Meanwhile the European variable adds a complication to the

Turkish situation regarding the controversies across the Atlantic in dealing with Iraq. Turkey tries to follow a balanced conduct gathering the strong alliance with U.S as a priority and promoting relations with the European Union countries in order to keep serving its goal of integration and using -if possible- the first priority to realize its other aims - especially in post war era.

Turkey plays a crucial regional role in the current and next stage not only because of its strategically, political, economical and cultural weights in the region but mainly because it is one of the most suitable actor to play an intermediary role between the West and the Middle Eastern states. A major promotion had been given to the Turkish regional role in the aftermath of the cold war: to strengthen the Turkish presence in the Arab and Islamic worlds but not at the expense of the western orientation of the foreign Turkish policy. On the contrary, this new focus will fulfill and complete its strategical role and weight in front of the new inputs of the new international system. This trend gained increased importance after 9/11 on different levels. Some analysis had criticized the rapprochement with Iran and Syria as an impediment to this role, while it is –on the opposite- a good step to improve and enlarge the Turkish regional weight because it proves the ability of holding connections with all different states in the Middle East region. Thus, when Turkey suggests to intermediate in the Arab Israel peace process, all the regional actors welcome this step because of the new balanced role of Turkey.

Before the war, the Turkish cooperation with U.S continued but not to the same extend expected by the Americans, because their demands were partially accepted. But after the quick fall of Baghdad, the Turkish politicians focused on dealing with the consequences of post war era especially the Kurdish question, the future of Iraq after Saddam and its reconstruction.

Even before the war the Turkish stance was based on two courses: the first was endorsing all efforts to reach a peaceful solution to the crisis and on the other addressing post war settlements in a way to secure a minimum threat to the Turkish national security and to achieve the most benefits on the economic and strategic levels.

For the Turkish objectives, it was always preserving Iraq's territorial integrity, limiting the armaments of the Kurdish organizations in the North and increasing the role of UN in post war era.

The Iraqi crisis had resulted in some benefits and losses for Turkey. Concerning the gains, we could include the end of the refugee problem because of the rapid war in Iraq, the escape of most of the terrorists in Northern Iraq because of the American military deployment in this part and the economic benefits expected from the important role given to Turkey in reconstructing Iraq and in providing the American troops with many of its various needs.

But on the other hand, Turkey faces serious challenges like: strengthening Kurdish positions in Northern Iraq by any means or under any arrangements – especially that the Iraqi federalism give some special advantages to the Kurdish area in the North, the remaining ambiguous situation within the transnational phase of establishing the Iraqi political system, which is full of diversity and tensions, to diminish Turkmen groups role in the political future of this country and the regional role that Iraq could in the future play and compete the Turkish valuable weight within the American strategy.

Because of Turkish fears, the government remains to have a solid connection with Iran and Syria on the regional level, and German and France on the international level as an effective way to balance the situation. That is why we could notice some shared points with these states like emphasizing on U.N role and establishing a representative government in Iraq.

The Salmania crisis reflects the delicate sensibilities in the American – Turkish relations towards Iraq especially concerning the Kurdish question and how it could represent a serious conflict of interest. But the situation was rapidly contained due to the remaining need from both sides to keep the important strategic alliance.

Turkey is concerned about the de-stabilizing consequences of political change in Iraq, especially in the Northern part. Deployment of Turkish troops in Northern Iraq was a reason behind a serious debate in Turkey for months at the end of year 2003. Despite a popular refusal, The Turkish parliament accepts deploying some Turkish divisions in Iraq. But due to the strong opposition from different segments of the Iraqi people

and the Iraqi governing council (specially the Kurds member), the Turkish government announced that no Turkish deployment would be in Iraq yet it will keep its right to interfere in case of any threat to Turkish security and interests. This decision was widely considered a wise one despite its negative consequences on the expected Turkish role in the reconstruction phase and in tensioning American Turkish relations. Some scholars argue that the Turkish democracy that leads to this hesitated cooperation with U.S before and after the war was a major reason behind "not selling the Kurds for the third or fourth time"[8] completely. Not extending the Turkish presence in Northern Iraq is a major reason behind strengthening Kurdish- American rapprochement, this created a more flexible American situation towards giving special advantages to the Kurdish self-rule area in the Iraqi temporary constitution. On the other hand this decision was a necessarily one to keep a more balanced role for Turkey in post war era.

- The Iranian stance:

The expansion of the American existence over all the Iranian borders presents a real international, regional and domestic challenge for Iran. Like most of the Middle Eastern states, Iran opposed the American military action in Iraq seeing it as an unjustified process. The Iranian position was based on what was called "positive neutrality" while seeking to prevent the war in the beginning by all possible means.

In post war era, the Iranian stance was based on refusing any "new dictatorship" in Iraq established by an American governor, because if Iran had welcomed the fall of Saddam regime, it is for the Iraqi people to take the responsibility of deciding their future.[9] Many Iranian officials had declared, "Good relations could be established only with an elected Iraqi government". Because governing Iraq by a foreigner is "a strategic mistake" as always repeated in different Iranian statements, Iran emphasized the importance of a UN role in post war phase and in supervising elections to form a legitimate government. Iran gives importance to include all the opposition movements in the future political equation and the Supreme Council for Islamic Revolution was mentioned as an essential partner "who must play big role to preserve the interests of the Iraqi people".[10]

The Iranian influence in the Shiite South in Iraq had been used to some extend to endorse the expansion of the Iranian regional role as an attempt to balance partially the American homogeneity in that part of the world. The delicate situation needs some cautious steps to be done to invest this historical fact (the Shiite influence and rapprochement) but without provoking the American conservative administration. These Iranian attempts were translated in increasing Iranian media role across the borders (Al Alam station), permitting to the militia "Badr division" to enter Iraq and on the top is the return of Al Hakim the head of the Supreme council of Islamic Revolution which had been considered (before his death) to be the major Iranian ally in Iraq.[11]

In general, Iran recognized the unpleasant fact of the surrounding American presence. Many voices especially from the moderate camp begun to speak about the importance of rethinking the relationship with U.S. Knowing the framework of the Iranian decision making and the big weight given to the conservative camp in external affairs, all of that indicate the relative Iranian consent on adopting a balanced policies in which accepting losses in some issue to gain benefits in much more important ones from the Iranian national interest perspective. Thus, in issues that are more related to the domestic Iraqi situation, we could notice more flexible stance, for example no critics had been heard concerning the Iraqi council and the Shiite groups had been gathering on choosing a peaceful mean to deal with occupation away from declaring jihad –like the twenties of the previous century- without any Iranian pressures to change this attitude.

The Iranian stance is based on different degrees of flexibility. More the concerned issues are less engaged with Iran immediate national interest, more the cooperative attitude appears. Meanwhile, more objecting policies control the Iranian behavior in which the space of compromise exist but to a limited extent (like in the Nuclear file).

Regionally, Iran tries its best to maneuver as much as possible. Increased attempts to expand its regional relations, the moves towards Egypt was a model of this increased need to ameliorate its regional presence within the threatening context imposed by U.S that Iran face in this phase.

B- Old Issues..New Approaches:

The current agenda debated in the Middle East witnessed a new hierarchy full of old issues but discussed with new approaches. Democratization, arms control and Arab Israeli conflict were always main problems related to the deterioration of the regional situation. But the hierarchy of these dilemmas has changed in accordance with the new focus of the American vision not due to the necessities of reality. For example, the escalated tension and disturbances on the Iraqi front affected the degree of attention given to the Palestinian issue. Still Palestinians suffering seized a lot of importance especially within the Arab circles. But due to the blockage of the peace process, the relative retreat of the American sponsorship and the remaining standards of Israeli aggressive policies, the Palestinian problem is no longer ranked on the top priority of region interest. Now there is the Iraqi crisis, reform problems, and disarmament efforts ....etc....

These changes are not confined to the issues hierarchy, but more important to the tools and mechanisms used to solve the problems related. More direct and violent means seem less costly in this phase. A comprehensive outlook dominated the approaches adopted to deal with these issues. For reform issue, it is seen as a complicated process that covered cultural, economic, social, military and political aspects.

- Reforming the Middle East:

Voices in the region are asking a big question: who will be next? The list of states nominated to be next in the field of American actions begins with Syria, Iran reaching other regional partners like Saudi Arabia and Egypt despite being classified as moderates allies. But, from the American perspective, the existing economic, cultural and political systems help to create a suitable climate for terrorism oriented against the West. So many observers think that invading Iraq is not the end but just the beginning of targeting all the big entities in the region with the blessing and pressures of the international Zionist movement.[12]

Reform issue is now on the top discussed subjects. It is a reflection of the new American priorities announced after the failure of finding weapons of mass destruction in Iraq. The American discourse infront of the media focuses on the necessity of building a democratic model in Iraq as an example to be followed by the entire region. The American

discourse emphasized in many of its diplomatic formal initiatives on the importance of reforming the Middle East politically, economically and culturally to serve security needs in the first place. So, a security concept for democracy appeared to control any move towards democratization in the region and both the American attempts in Afghanistan and Iraq endorses this new approach.

Before launching the war, many American voices arose to speak about the necessity "of getting rid of Saddam not his regime", because it was useful in securing allies like Turkey and Saudi Arabia who are very important allies to American vital interests: the first present an essential component of U.S support for the Gulf states and the second is an essential component of U.S control of Middle Eastern oil. To create "Saddamism without Saddam" was the best of all the worlds for Washington. [13] But this trend had changed after the third gulf war for several reasons: U.S is launching its war against terrorism which is flourish within the environment of regimes like Saddam's, U.S had failed to find weapons of mass destruction that justified the war in the first place and the Iraqi resistance is getting stronger making the American presence a costly one. All of this pushes the American administration towards resetting its priorities and giving more importance to the establishment of a democratic model (but friendly) in Iraq and elsewhere.

What were the regional responses to this new emphasis on democracy and reform? Most of the regions actors did not receive well these attempts despite still being on the theoretical and diplomatic formal initiatives level.

With every additional statement on how the regime change in Iraq can catalyze a model of democracy to inspire the whole region, more regional states concentrate on diminishing the credibility of U.S claims and how it is not suitable for the specific circumstances of the region rather than on reforming their own system.[14]

Most of the Arab states disapproved the claims of reform launched mainly by the Americans and then the Europeans. Many states like Egypt, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia emphasized on the necessity of reform but as a homegrown process respecting the cultural and social specifities of each actor in the region. Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Syria rank on the top of the

regional actors refusing Bush's initiatives called "The Great Middle East".[15]

Even Mr. Amr Moussa, the general secretary of the Arab league, had declared different statement criticizing this chain of reform initiatives, and he said that the Arab leaders did not refuse reform and they are going through a process of "entering changes from inside". An Arab formal consensus appears on the American responsibilities of hurting reform efforts in the region through its bias stance towards the Palestinian issue.[16] The Arab discourse criticized the American initiatives mainly the one labeled "The Great Middle East" because it completely ignores the Palestinian issue.

The democracy debate has been reflected within each state in the region differently and created a distinction between informal camps: one with reform based on western criteria other insists on defending the cultural specifities. Both of the camps refuse the American interference and see the reform process as an internal affair in the first place even when they agree on its necessity.

In Saudi Arabia, the elite is divided on how to deal with the reform dilemma: Crown Prince Abdullah leads the camp of liberal reformers seeking rapprochement with the West, while Prince Nayef -the Interior Minister, sides with an anti-American Wahhabi religious establishment. For a long time, the Saudi monarchy functions as the intermediary between two political communities: a westernized elite that looks to the West as a model of political development and a Wahhabi religious establishment that holds up its interpretation of Islam's golden age as a guide and refuse any reduction of religious institutions power.[17]

While many promises of reform had been issue through several official statements and the increased space of debate, some arrests had been hold against intellectuals. Recent arrests of some reformist figures in Saudi Arabia were considered a kind of backlash to the previous Saudi intension to begin several steps for gradual reform.[18]

The Egyptian response was more obvious in the formal speeches and informal debates. President Mubarak had intensively tackled the issue of reform but he tries to emphasize on its gradualism and its internal aspects. He sponsored one of the big conferences on Arab reform; the conference has issued a very ambitious document called "Alexandria document", but

still all the Egyptian moves stopped at the level of speeches and not going over this limit to enter the phase of implementation.

As for Iran, all the official statements attack directly and strictly the U.S policies –not only from the conservative and Khameini on the top but also from moderates. Most of the hostile speeches concentrated on the American attempts to interfere or to welcome any internal events in Iran (like the students demonstration) or commenting on the nature of the Iranian political regime made several times by Bush and his team. On the contrary these kind of American attitude helps more the conservative and empowers their logic in front of the moderate. The rigid American vision for Iran and the extensive climate of threats could be considered as one of the reasons behind the new expanding of the conservatives within the Iranian institutions.

Regarding the democratization trend, the Turkish actor played a very different and special role due to secular and relative democratic type of its regime. Turkey does not present for U.S an economic and strategic asset but more important it is a model of moderation, secularism, democracy and modern Islam. The Turkish response for the great Middle East initiative was different. In his last visit to Washington, Prime Minister Ardoghan had spoken about the Turkish role of being an ideal inspiration for the entire region in proving the possibility of having democracy in Muslim countries.

On the popular level, Middle Eastern populations are far more hostile to U.S policy than they are for reforming their own governments and they doubt that the U.S could possibly be serious about giving them a greater voice. They resent American cultural dominance and fear U.S domination of their economies. [19]

- Future Iraqi regime:

Big challenges have to be faced to accomplish a democratic model in Iraq; it is a model that will have regional impacts. Building a democracy in Iraq would mean a powerful voice for the Shiite majority. Iraq's social and political order would be informed by Shiite Islam, which increased the Gulf States fears towards the extension of Iranian influence. Throughout the Gulf there are a number of Shiite Muslims who might be encouraged to challenge their situation. In Bahrain, the Shiite makes up the majority of the population. In Saudi Arabia, the proportion is

relatively small (8%), still Shiite position could create potential for friction.[20]

The future of the Iraqi regime was not discussed in detail nor extensively by the region actors except for Turkey and then Iran because of the close and important relation between the new proposed system and the direct national interest of these two countries. As for most of the Arab states, the stance remain the same: increasing demands for transferring power to a representative Iraqi government with expressing a respect for the principle of not interfering in the internal affairs. Most of the Arab leaders emphasized on the importance of U.N role in building stability and electing the new system.

Again, the hegemonic American role in shaping Iraqi regime post Saddam leads to a lack of any real regional influence in deciding between different possible scenarios for Iraq. Turkey -and to some extend Iran - could be the exception, the first because of the high interest in the Kurdish question and the close relationship with U.S, while the second for its historical and cultural relation with the Shiite in the south.

In the Middle East, there is historical proof of the fragmentation with centrifugal tendencies –as vatikiutis said -, and therefore long period of conflicts appears but with a permanent difficult problem of political control. Despite ethnic sectarian diversity, the continuity of culture had kept the region from disintegrating completely. This tension between cultural unity and political diversity (or hostility) existed during different historical phases.[21] Kurds in the North present a special case of a continuous ethnic problem to the Iraqi central regime.

In post Iraq war era, the ethnical and sectarian factors gains an increased focus because of the complicated diversity in the Iraqi territories and its impact on regional balances and the future of its neighbors. For decades the Kurdish problem has been less of a concern for Iran and Syria than Turkey for many reasons: most importantly because of the big Kurdish minority with a long history of conflict with the system inside the Turkish borders. So, the most involved country in this issue is the Turkish regional actor, due to the importance of the Kurdish question for the national interest. Turkey tries to use its balanced relationship with Iran and Syria to create a solid regional cooperation to prevent the situation from exploding.

How to develop a unifying frame in the context of religious sectarian? This is a major question; all the countries in the region are seeking the answer and defending the scenario of Iraq territorial integration.

- Mass destruction weapons:

Using American military force to disarm Iraq from its weapons of mass destruction as a declared justified aim is the last step in a long chain of old policies taken in the last five decades.[22] The issue of controlling weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East is debated from a long time ago. The variables controlling this problem still exist and gain more strength in the post cold war era especially after 9/11:

1- The increased international constraints put on Middle Eastern actors a lot of pressure to prevent any purchase of any kind of mass destruction (especially atomic weapons).

2- The acceptance and even the welcoming of keeping Israel as the sole atomic power in the region (if we consider Pakistan out of the Middle East region).

3- The lack of Arab or regional will (except Iran) to obtain and build an atomic power. Obtaining weapons of mass destruction is a political issues not a technical and legal one. The decision of not promoting the capabilities needed in this field had been widely taken in the region.[23] Most of the Middle Eastern decision makers have a conviction that it is not in the benefit of their states to adopt this strategic decision and they believe in achieving balances with Israel by other less provocative mass destruction weapons (mainly chemical).

The international setting offers more and more obstacles for any regional states intending to join the atomic club. The American policies are very rigid concerning this issue and it was escalated after 9/11 and reaching its highest level. Within the context of relatively easy military interventions in Afghanistan and Iraq, the American warnings have been taking seriously. Libya presents here an example of the victory of American policies –as it is always repeated in American statements and in regional critics to the Libyan move-. On the other hand, the American language of defending Israel nuclear arsenals was more clear, justified and direct.

A retreat in using the democratic issue against Iran appeared in comparison to the focusing on the nuclear file to exercise pressure on Iran. Israel plays an important role in intensifying hostile American campaign against the Iranian atomic program. It sees the Iranian potentialities in this sphere as the most serious threat to the security of the Jewish state. For Iran, obtaining high technology in atomic field is a must to be invested for civil purposes, while they keep denying any intention to produce atomic weapon.[24] At the same time, the right of self-defense remains the core stone of the Iranian perspective, regarding these circumstances full of tension and threats for Iran. The Iranian discourse dealing with this matter is built around criticizing the double standards policies of the American administration in which it closes its eye on Israeli nuclear power and "tries to cover it failure in Iraq and Afghanistan" by exaggerating the nuclear program of Iran.[25]

The Islamic Republic of Iran has adopted a limited cooperative policy with the IAEA, while signing the additional protocol; it did not denounce its right for activating uranium and seeking nuclear technology. This situation is evident in Khameini statement:" We will produce the activated uranium with the respect of the international regulations".[26]

The Egyptian discourse share some points with Iranians by criticizing the duality of criteria in this issue, referring always to the Israel exception accepted and endorsed by the American strategy. The Egyptian leadership demand to consider the Iraqi case as a first step to make the Middle East a region with no weapons of mass destruction.

- **Conclusion:**

The regional setting in the different phases of the Iraqi war proved to be very vulnerable to international intervention especially an American one. Most of the actors conducts have been characterized by a huge gap between the opposing formal discourses and the actual behaviors adopted. Only the states with closer relationship with U.S enjoy a better degree of credibility of their statements because they rely on a clear vision that justified a silent or cooperative attitude towards American policies in Iraq and legitimizing it. Thus, it is no more a mix of international, regional and domestic sets of variables that shape the impact over the events (and here is Iraqi crisis), but the international component plays an extremely increased influence (especially

before and during the war operation). Even in Post war era still these variables interfere to affect the regional and domestic responses.

Still all the regional responses towards all debatable issues raised confined in formal, diplomatic, broad and vague statements without launching any real and practical mechanisms or detailed visions to offer a regional suitable program to tackle important issues like reform process, imbalance of power in the region and containing ethnical and sectarian differences in Iraq.

Big regional power: Turkey, Iran and Egypt adopted all the policies and pursue all ways to increase their role in the reconstruction phase. The National domestic interest –mainly in the economic field- controls the vision of the regional actors. Most of them seek international means and organizations out of the region to explain their stance and achieve their goals.

Endnotes

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COMMENTATOR:

Dr. Meliha Altunisk*

I will try to underline some major points. The feeling of weakness in the region combined with the reaction of passive acceptance of what has happened, the enormous international presence in the region and the reaction that is building against it is important regarding the future of this region in the coming years and must be taken into consideration.

This reminds me of the feeling in the region after 1967: the sense of weakness, crisis and helplessness. This raises questions about the regimes stability in the region: what does this sense of weakness, vulnerability and reaction of passive acceptance mean for the regimes.

Another important issue is that there is a lot of uncertainty concerning the US plans for the region. When I compare the US policy after the cold war again I find that we are at a critical juncture. At that time the international system was going through enormous transformation followed by the gulf war, which had a tremendous impact. I remember Egyptian commentator Mohamed Hassanien Heikal talking about the Soviet quake and the Arab quake.

Therefore again we are at a critical juncture, but the difference is that the US position at that time- in terms of building a new regional order- was mainly working with its allies including Syria to solve the Arab-Israeli conflict, then the peace process started later on and strengthened by the Oslo peace process. So there was another attempt to build a regional order at that critical juncture but it failed at the end of the 1990's.

September 11 strengthened threats that were already there and changed some of the perceptions in the US administration on how they define threats and strategy. After the Iraq war we are at a stage that is really hard for the regional powers to see what is ahead in terms of the

*** Transcript of the comment given by Dr Meliha Altunisk-Associate Professor, Department of International Relations, Middle East Technical University, Ankara, Turkey.**

US plans for the region, it creates a lot of uncertainties and it makes it uneasy to explore what is happening.

Even the project of the Greater Middle East and the fact that it will be announced in the G8 summit in June 2004 is a sort of an example to what is coming, the question is how these things are cooked outside the region. Therefore critical questions would be: what are the US plans? What will happen in Iraq and its future? What about the Palestinian issue? No serious attempts have been taken to solve this issue.

In that context the emergence of the idea of the Greater Middle East initiative understandably raises many questions for the people in the region and there is this credibility gap that exists and ofcourse, it raises the issue of how the US plans to implement this initiative.

It seems to me that the administration doesn't want to deal with the regimes anymore but maybe with the civil society and different groups but the question is: Are these groups ready to cooperate with external powers in facilitating this transformation? What I am really concerned about is the demands for reform in the region precedes the Greater Middle East initiative. There have been pressures for reform, good governance and accountability for some time. Some of these discourses have been appropriated by the Bush administration. I am concerned that these genuine demands for reform could be delegitimized because of this link. This sensitivity may touch those who prepared the Human Development report because now this report has been used by the Bush administration to push the Greater Middle East initiative. The reformers in this area face that dilemma, they have been calling for real reform and change in the region but what to do concerning this new US policy in context of other US policies in the region.

Another point I would like to underline is the relationship between the major powers. Not only the Middle East is in a critical juncture but the whole international system. There is a debate of the features of the international system, which has not been settled since the end of the cold war: What would be the norms and principles of this international system?

Ofcourse the US is the hegemonic hyper power in the system, but what about the other major powers and the relationship between them. There are different ways of looking at this, whether like the cold

war where the major powers were playing one power against the other or more cooperation and competition among them.

Within that context we talked about the EU, the Iraq war was a major challenge to the EU, the lack of a common policy which was a major test case of EU common foreign security policy is still being debated.

I think that despite some competition and differences in terms of means, there are so many commonalities between the EU and the USA perspective towards the Greater Middle East initiative. There is similarity between the Greater Middle East initiative and the Wider Europe project and I would say that the US position came closer to the EU in trying to deal with these issues in terms of social, economic and political means. As for Russia and China they are not competitors.

When it comes to the Middle East there seems to be an agreement on the need to transform this region and I do not see the cold war competition between those groups to allow maneuvering for the regional state rather they agree on the basic of transformation in the region.

DISCUSSIONS

Dr. Nadia Mostafa - Director of the CPRS-

My question is about the possibility of coordination between Iran, Turkey and Egypt in light of the presentation given by Dr. Pakynam El Sharkawy, which raised many points about the similarities of Arab, Turkish and Iranian position. The three centers of powers – Arab countries, Turkey and Iran- in the Middle East are confronting different degrees of challenges from the outside therefore what are the possibilities of coordination between them either on issues or circumstances?

My second remark is concerning what Dr. Mostafa Elwy precisely said that Iraq is witnessing a process of remaking which is done only by the Americans themselves thus he used the expression "remaking" and not "reconstructing".

Previously we talked about the reconstruction of Iraq- politically and economically- and I had a question about reconstruction; by whom and according to what model, and it was in my intention to arrive to such a conclusion -as Dr. Hassan Abou Taleb shared with me- that it is a purely American plan, therefore we don't have a chance to play a role whether as Egyptians or Turks.

Besides the issue of the integrity of Iraq, we all agree and declare the necessity of preserving the territorial integrity of Iraq, and this is clear enough between Iranian, Turks, Egyptians and all Arabs in general. Arabs and Turkish sides should proclaim clearly there stands concerning the political reconstruction inside Iraq yet why am I asking this question? Because Dr. Mostafa Elwy said that the USA is trying to make Iraq a model for the reformation in the region, how could it be so with all the obstacles faced in the internal scene of Iraq? .

My final question is directed to Dr. Altunisk who has clearly stated several very smart conclusions, one of them is that the USA has always been in contact and working together with allies in solving problems of the area yet now things are being planned and cooked outside the region and will be imposed on it, so this explains the uncertainty about regional powers and about the future.

Also we have said that the USA is heading towards dealing with forces inside countries and not with the systems themselves, so I am asking about the differences between the Iranian case and the Turkish case during the last election. In each of the two countries- the Iranian elections that took place in the last two months and the Turkish elections in November 2002- elections were done under very important external pressures thus the result of the Iranian elections can be explained by some analysts that the conservatives have won this campaign because the reformers were linked to the US demands, this is a trend of explanation of why reformers in Iran didn't have a chance to achieve results vis a vis the conservatives. I think the reverse happened in Turkey, for how can we explain the majority obtained by the party of justice and development in Turkish elections a year and a half ago -a majority different than before- although this party presented itself in an " Islamic " robe because of its name and its history.

Dr. Mostafa Elwy:

Although the questions raised deal with big issues, I will try to be as short as possible. I am in full agreement with the assessment of Dr. Meliha Altunisk regarding the prospected future of the international system and the sort of interactions and relationships between the major powers, USA on one hand and other powers on the other hand specifically the European powers. I think the point is very clear that European powers differ with the USA not in terms of objectives or goals, because they share the same objectives and goals such as counter terrorism, and removal of WMD. The issue of misleading the international community regarding Iraq's alleged possession of WMD is another issue because this delegates from the political legitimacy of the American course of action towards Iraq during the war and after the war, but this is a subsidiary issue from the bigger issue of WMD. Non in Europe or the USA disagree or oppose the objective of freeing all the world -with the exception of the five permanent members of the security council - from all types of WMD, so this is a shared common objective of the USA and the Europeans in spite of the divisions within the EU. What makes some European countries differ with the United States is the means, instruments and policies carried out to accomplish such objectives and this is why you are correct, because in post war Iraq the distance that

used to separate the USA from its European allies has been shortened and now all the European members and permanent powers agreed on all resolutions passed by the Security Council.

Regarding the future of Iràq, even Germany and France have softened their position on the possible peacekeeping role that is to be played by NATO in the post war Iraq after the transfer of power and sovereignty in July 1st 2004. Although Germany maintains its policy of not sending any German troops to Iraq, the German chancellor made it very clear that he will not object to the dispatching of NATO forces into Iraq in order to improve the security conditions and to participate in peacekeeping missions inside Iraq.

As you noticed the two parties are now getting along regarding the initiatives being proposed by both of them regarding the future of the Middle East. They both share the principles and general orientation for the Middle East region and they are coming closer to each other on this specific issue, the greater Middle Eastern initiative will be discussed by the G8 and NATO summit in June 2004.

Thus June 2004 will be a very decisive month because the G8, NATO and EU summit will all be held during this month and this initiative will be on the agenda of the three summits.

I think starting from July this region will face a much more serious challenge represented by such an initiative. It was reported in AlAhram that Colin Powell in his latest trip to the region handed over to a number of leaders in certain Arab countries- specifically Kuwait- a new version of the initiative that will be sponsored by the USA, EU and the Arab league. A major objection to the initial initiative was that it was to be imposed from abroad but in the new version presented by Powell this objection will be taken into consideration and dropped thus if you accept this new version then you will be sharing in the responsibility and sponsorship of such an initiative, that initiative will be sponsored by Arabs, Americans and Europeans.

Concerning the remaking or reconstruction of Iraq- the question posed by Dr. Nadia Mostafa- I think that it's a remaking process rather than a reconstruction process because if we read carefully the text of the interm constitution that was passed very recently, Islam or the Islamic jurisprudence is not considered the main source of legislation in Iraq and

that's a brand new element since all Arab countries have a provision in their constitution that stipulates that Islamic jurisprudence is the main source of legislation.

Thus you have for the first time a new model in which Islam is only a source- not the main source- for legislation and this is a clear cut political message for everyone in the region that it is a remaking process of an Arab country that is Islamic.

Also a new element has been added which is federalism, Arabs are not used to federalism in general whether it is geographic federalism or sectarian federalism. This is a new element that makes it a process of remaking not reconstruction. Reconstruction is usually done on the same principles and orientations that have existed before in the past but you improve and revive them, that is what is meant by reconstruction in my understanding. This is indicated in making or introducing brand new elements which is very crucial to the future of the country, like Sectarian and ethnic federalism that gives the Kurds specifically the right of veto not only for the principles of the interm constitution but also to veto the permanent constitution, if 2/3rd majority of three provinces named in the interim constitution- Urbal, Sulmaina and Kurkook -vote against any provision then it is vetoed. Urbal and Solimania are Kurdish, Kurkook is not but the Kurds are claiming that it is. Moreover according to the interm constitution villages whose majority of its population are Kurdish but are outside the Kurdish province or sub region of Iraq are to be annexed to the Kurdish provinces of Iraq. The names of the provinces are also mentioned in the constitution for example Naynawa is a governerate in Iraq in which there are a number of villages of Kurdish majority, these villages will be taken out of Naynawa and annexed a the Kurdish province.

If the draft permanent constitution is vetoed by the Kurds then another must be drafted within a year which means that the Iraqi people will spend one extra year in drafting the constitution then there will be another referendum and if there is another veto from the Kurds then there is no permanent constitution for the Iraqi state. Thus there are a number of time bombs in the interm constitution that was passed and written under the direct sponsorship of the USA, it wasn't a genuine Iraqi constitution and that is why I used the term remaking on purpose and not

reconstructing, and that will give other Arab countries a very bad model: a model for chaos and confusion.

Dr. Meliha Altunisk:

The question asked was about the reformers linked with outsiders. Although Dr. Nadia said that the victory of the conservatives in the Iranian case can be explained by the links between reformers and the outside forces especially the United States, I don't agree with this view, I think the reason the victory of conservatives in Iran was because of the fact that the reform candidates were retailed by the council of guardians and there is a enormous apathy among the Iranians. There is a small group of conservatives that are ruling the system and although they have been constantly voting for the reformist candidates, they have been seeing that nothing has been changed. Never the less the question you raised is very important and I actually eluded to it when I talked about the Arab specialist who prepared the Arab human development report. There is possibility of delegitimizing the indigenous reformist and reform proposals. For instance in the Turkish experience that debate has been raised because there has been an active EU involvement in the Turkish reform process. Understandably they worked not only with the government but also with several civil society organizations and groups. We have had several debates in Turkey about this issue that some of these connections lead to problems.

I think the Turkish experience of reform- not only the recent experience but the democratization process in the fifties- proves the importance of external factors. Although ultimately reform is an internal process, the external environment can provide opportunities for this process. Having said this I understand that the issue of the outside link is a sensitive issue and it may create similar debates in Arab countries, if it is really the US plan to work not with governments at all but through civil society organizations.

As for the AK party winning the election, it was mainly due to what was happening in Turkey. We had just suffered the worst economic crisis in the history of the republic since 1945 and basically in that election what electorates did was that they voted out all the parties that were in the parliament including those in opposition and bought in two

parties, the AK party which was newly established and the Republican Peoples Party which was the oldest party in Turkey but it was out of parliament before that election. Thus there was an enormous reaction to what was happening domestically in Turkey and AK party itself is considered a coalition party. We generally emphasis the Islamic roots of some of the party members but you have other members that used to be in centralist parties. We have to emphasis that they never said that they were an Islamic party and they adopted positions that were very different from the former Islamist parties such as supporting the EU membership..etc.

Dr. Pakynam El Sharkawy

It's very important to talk about the possibility of establishing regional cooperation, to break this circle of weakness and passivity. I think when Dr. Nadia was speaking about Egypt and Iran, Egypt and Turkey having good relation. Turkey and Iran have more and more rapprochement. So I think the missing part is Egypt and its relations with Iran.

Iran- due to its threatening regional context- is working towards the improvement of its regional presence, this will really help in not only creating a more powerful region but at least to minimize this deep structural weakness and to regain some of our regional balances.

As for the elections, I think the American and western initiatives for reform are not working towards benefiting reformers because they make the situation very sensitive for those who speak about reform in the region since they will be related to the outsiders.

External factors are not the major factors for elections but at least the new American presence in the region created a more solid ground for the conservatives in Iran, their statements became more logically heard but ofcourse this is a governing factor not a major one.

Comment (name not defined)

I have a comment concerning what Dr Mostafa Elwy said about the Iraqi model. The perception of the Iraqi model has to be rethinked, it is not a model to follow but a model for other countries to be frightened

of, in other words if you don't follow this you may be subjected to the same measures, I think this is what is meant by the Iraqi model.

My question concerns a comment by Dr. Meliha on the role of the civil society in the Greater Middle East initiative, this is an important question: what is really the role of civil society? As an Egyptian I know anything about civil society in Turkey and on the other hand the Turks don't know much about the civil society in Egypt. Thus what is your perception of the role of the civil society in both of these countries? Is there a room for cooperation? If this is an important issue in the initiative therefore it will be an important matter in the future.

Dr. Meliha Altunisk

This is what I meant when I talked about sharing the Turkish experience. I think that it is an excellent idea to create contact between Egyptian and Turkish civil societies to come up with ideas of what they can do. These kind of transnational links are becoming very important in facilitating democratization in the region. The models are an abstract idea but this is how things work in practice and I think this should be definitely done.

Dr. Sema Kalaycioglu- Professor- Isik University

Just a minor comment on Dr. Meliha respond to Dr. Elwy's questions about the AK party resuming power in parliament. You said that Turkey was coming out of the worst economic crisis in its history so they voted out all the parties. I think there is still unexplained part of the equation that we kind of underestimate the role of the coalition government in implementing reforms, legislating new laws and pulling the country out of the worst economic crisis of its history prior to AK party resuming power. In other words, the country had already passed the crisis when AK Party got the majority so there is an unexplained variable why the voters voted the other parties out of the parliament.

Dr. Meliha Altunisk

I agree that the coalition government initiated the process that took the country out of the crisis, also in terms of the EU they have done several reforms but the point is that because of the elections they didn't remain long enough to enjoy its results therefore the general perspective in the public was that they were fed up with the crisis and corruption. There was not a sense that we were out of the crisis. As an analyst we can say that they were the ones that started the reform but they didn't stay in power long enough to benefit from it and the timing of election was very crucial in that respect.

Dr. Mostafa Elwy

The civil society in any Middle Eastern country will have to play a very significant role in any reform plan because now we are living in the era of governance, and governance is very different from government. Governance is the product of positive interaction between governments, private sectors and civil society. So whether its an American, European or genuine Middle Eastern initiative, the civil society is invited to play a very active role in all efforts aiming at reform whether political, cultural, economic or social. Yet there is a big difference between having civil society being very active in discharging its responsibility for contributing to the reform plans of these countries directly or in cooperation with government or private sector of every individual country in the Middle East on one hand and between having the civil society of a country in the region cooperating directly with the external powers without cooperating with its government or private sector.

In terms of financing, political sponsorship and giving the civil society ideas, if it is a tri-pertide cooperation between the civil society, government and international environment there is nothing wrong, but if it is a direct bilateral relationship between the civil society of Egypt and the external powers here comes the devuse atmosphere of the role that is to be played by the civil society and I think its impact in that case will be negative rather than positive and encouraging and helping the reform process.

Ambassador. Murat Bilhan
Chairman of the Center for Strategic Research (SAM)

I want to make one correction in the concept concerning the Iranian and Turkish elections. In this respect I will add to what my two colleagues have mentioned. The parties taking the power should not be interpreted as a revival of Islam in Turkey, it is just a conglomerate of several levels of the society which were at discontent with the foreign policy, economic policy, corruption, banking scandals, so they came under one flag which united the rightist elements in elections unlike the leftist parties that could not unite, that is why they could not show there strength.

Traditionally, the population of Turkey is divided between 70% right, I don't mean religious right but liberal and economic right, and the left, which consists of 30%. This tradition has been broken this time, there is no longer 30% left but there is 70% right which were united under the flag of the AKP party, which might even rise in the next elections and according to public opinion polls. Therefore, we cannot say that they are a religious party and we must make a diagnosis of the character of that party.

About the Iranian elections, it will be too much of an expectation to say that there was an American finger supporting reformists, I think it might be an American wishful thinking and ofcourse they would side with the reformists but I don't think that they could do anything. The reformists were deprived from being represented in the parliament; this is why the field was open only for the conservatives and that is why they won.

Dr. Hassan Abou Taleb:
Center of Political and Strategic Studies- AlAhram

I have two small comments, I agree with what Dr. Elwy said about how dangerous is the federalist model adopted in the constitution in Iraq but I can say that we have a more dangerous model, which is happening in Sudan. All the design for the Sudanese negotiation now is built on preparing Sudan to be divided into two states after six or seven years so I think that this is more dangerous than what is going on in Iraq.

The second comment is about what is happening now in some Arab countries concerning the Shiites, in the eastern provinces in Saudi Arabia, the Amazeg minorities in Morocco, Tunis and Algeria. There are a lot of external hands, which encourage the Amazeg minorities to call their nationalistic image. I participated in one international seminar in Morocco three months ago and I found that this idea is prevailing in all the political dialogues among the Moroccan intellectuals.

This is a call for Arab intellectuals to reconsider the relationship with the Arab minorities in their countries. We must build a new trend with them or we can encourage the external power to come and to impose one aspect or another. This is our duty to consider the role of minority in the future.

Dr. Mostafa Elwy

What is going on in Iraq is serious, I just returned from Khartoum and I spent a week discussing Sudanese issues including the internal politics issue of Sudan, but there is a difference in kind between Sudan and Iraq, represented in the direct American military presence on the soil of Iraq which is not there in Sudan. Even if the scenario is going to be a divided Sudan, a two states Sudan that is very serious and dangerous to the national security of a number of countries in the region.

That difference in kind is the USA military occupation of Iraq, which is not an element in the equation of the Sudanese politics. The Americans in Iraq are there to stay for a long time even if the umbrella is to be changed from being forces of occupation to be American forces in the sovereign Iraq along the model of Japan and Germany in the immediate aftermath of the Second World War.

Concerning the Iranian elections, the objective of the USA is not to help the reformist against the radicals, the strategy of the USA is to change the regime as a whole whether it consists of the conservatives or the liberal reformists and it is the declared policy of the Bush administration. Changing the regime is the official declared policy. This is why in June 2003 the student demonstrations in the universities in Iran was the first ever in kind which was against the conservative radicals and the reformists and that is why the Bush administration made a public

statement that the US policy is endorsing such demonstration that are calling for the change of regime.

Comment (name not defined):

Allow me to switch from the context of Iranian and Iraqi elections back to the point of the USA in the region. I believe that the USA is giving us the recipe for reform. We all agree on the need for reform, but reforms must come from internal dynamics not recipes from foreign countries. The USA is now harassing some of the countries in the region- Syria and Iran- and the destiny of the region was decided in the G8 and in later summits. I would like to ask what could the regional power do to oppose or absorb the US hegemony in the region? What are the possible solutions or proposals to absorb such hegemony?
I am stressing on the point that Dr. Pakynam ElSharkawy and Dr Nadia Mostafa said about cooperation between regional powers Turkey- Iran and Egypt.

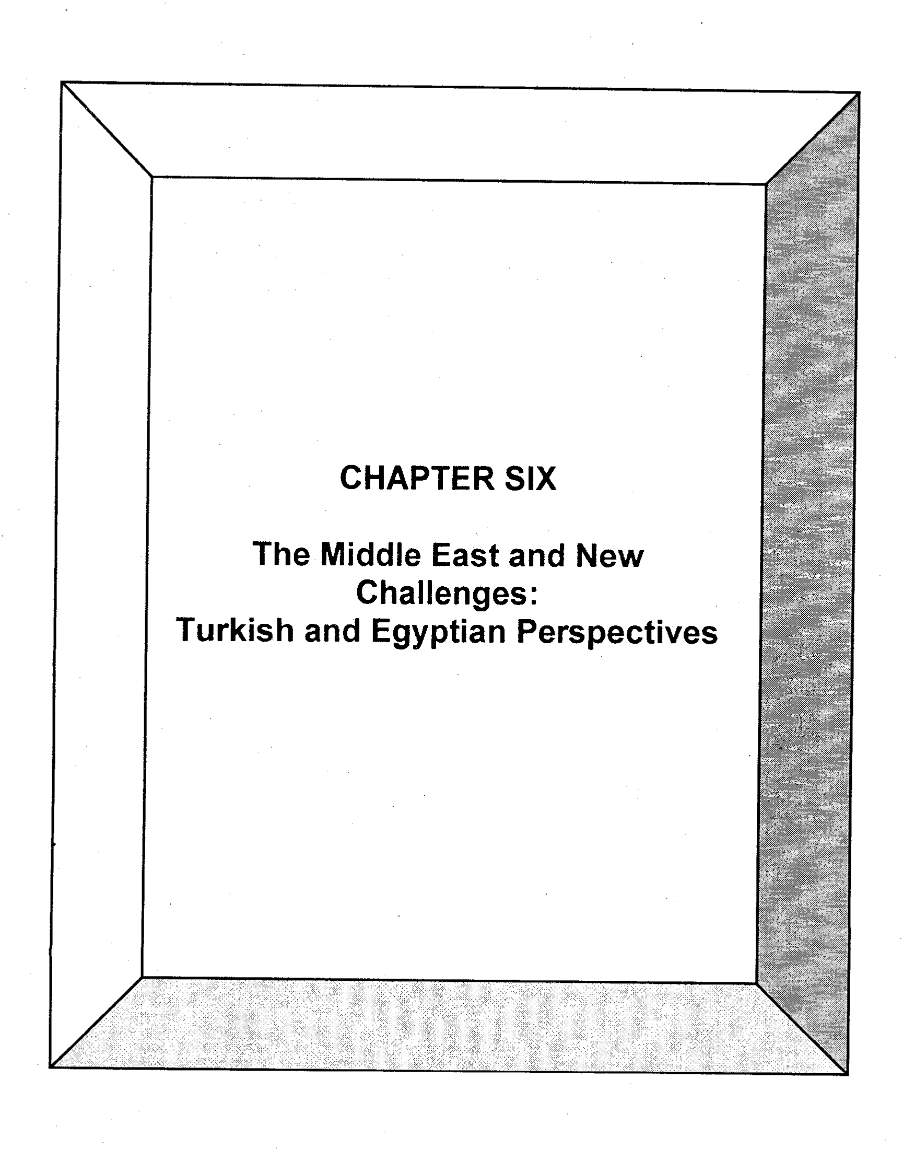
Ambassador Murat Bilhan
Chairman of the Center for Strategic Research (SAM)

Generally speaking, being in different fronts with certain other groups of states is not in the interest of the region, alliances to counter any kind of influences is not so easy and might be doomed to failure. Therefore, every country has its own mechanism of self-defense and its own conditions of absorbing the outer effects of any kind of suggestion to change, transform etc...

Turkey has been subjected to such pressures by the EU if Turkey wanted to become a member. Actually these pressures yielded some results and Turkish reforms began by internal dynamics but were assisted by external dynamics as well. Therefore Turkey has transformed itself and is still in the process of transformation not only on the level of administration and political reforms but also in economic reforms to adjust itself to the outer world, it is not only the EU but globalization dictates on us to change and adjust ourselves to outer influences.

The region is very vulnerable against any external pressures and it will transform itself but the most desirable mean is the internal dynamics,

but this internal dynamics should be put into action by our own countries and not by external forces because they may not care for our interests but they care for their own interests which do not conform with ours, we should find some common points and we should act together yet not as a front to confront the outside world and to fight them with the Islamic flag. We should put the dynamics in conformity with the changing conditions of the world and globalized standards and adjust ourselves and our reformist mentality using all the tools of the world today.



CHAPTER SIX

The Middle East and New Challenges: Turkish and Egyptian Perspectives

The Middle East and New Challenges: Security, Political, Economic and Cultural*

Dr. Abdel Monem Saeed**

I will begin my presentation with the point Dr. Bahgat Korany mentioned that the Middle East has always faced challenges that change over time - probably every ten years- however all these challenges revolve around the idea of security, development, and the fulfillment of certain values that make nations unique in one way or another. These are the broad challenges that we face every ten years in different ways, so when we say the challenges after September 11th we try to know what is unique about September 11th in each of these challenges to the Middle East.

The first challenge is related to globalization. The world now is moving from geopolitics to geoeconomics, from questions concerning the cold war to questions on globalization, therefore it is essential to know: what is the impact of September 11th on this challenge? The main impact is the reintroduction of security into what was largely considered to be an economic process of change in the world. Today Global security is on top of the political agenda and is one of the main variables of globalization. We now have globalization of security matters, for example in airports, in aspects of trade and investments.

The second challenge is that we are faced with a Middle East after 9-11. I understand that Dr. Mohamed Kadry Saeed has mentioned four changes in the Middle East system mainly that the Middle East has expanded in terms of scope and boundaries and that the mechanisms of change have changed as well due to the massive use of military force and the functions of the system. I don't want to repeat what he said but I want to stress that this in itself is considered to be a major challenge in a sense that we are no longer dealing with the post cold war Middle East which revolved around the Arab Israeli peace process and its offshoots from the

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***Transcript of the presentation given by Dr. Abdel Monem Saeed**

**** Director of the Center for Political and Strategic Studies-AlAhram**

multilateral negotiation, economic summits and the attempts to achieve peace.

The third challenge that we face is what we can call a "changed USA". We all might agree about the centrality of the USA since the Second World War and especially after the end of the cold war. September 11th created a changed USA with a massive influence for the so-called "new cause". This new cause was evident before September 11th however the power and ability to steer the world according to its own vision gained a lot of energy after 9-11.

This challenge had a great impact on how the USA views our region and how our region views the USA. Certainly, there is increased tension between the United States and the countries in the region especially the Arab countries. For example 9-11 resulted in tension and strain on Egyptian-US, Saudi- US relations and led to the Afghan and Iraqi war.

The fourth challenge is the challenge of legitimacy. The experience of 9-11 allowed to have an American theory in which there are two rule in the world: one for the law abiding states and nations and one for those who are not abiding by these rule. I am sure we are all familiar with Robert Kegan theory about the power of weakness in which he acknowledged the existence of two worlds, a world of legitimacy where rules are applied, and a world of chaotic nature that rules are not applied and as such the Middle East is considered part of the second world therefore this is considered to be a major challenge for the countries in the Middle East and that is how can we live with a superpower that considers our region outside the realm of legitimacy.

The fifth challenge is a challenge that appeared after the end of the cold war and that is the Palestinian challenge. This challenge has changed after 9-11 because for the first time Palestinian resistance is considered to be illegitimate. This vision has increased the gap between many in the Arab world and the USA. The banning of Hamas by the EU actually gave Israel a pretext to kill Mr. Ahmed Yassin. This new vision has added a new dimension to the Palestine question.

The sixth challenge- which I think is an ongoing and continuous challenge- is the challenge of reform or in terms of our society is the ability to adjust to the world. Now –a- days the calls for reform is taking

on a different type of form, its no longer limited to economic adjustment program in which countries are given physical responsibility to float their currency or to give more incentives, or in other words all the programs we knew as structural adjustments program. Instead, the reform of the 21st century is about values. Our media and educational system are not fitting the time. It is a challenge through which the world is imposing on us how to make political socializations and values. This is not easy to accept even if we decide as an option to, the problem is convincing the people with it. I make an empirical hypothesis that if you ask people today in the streets of Cairo what does it make to have reform, they will mention that its not just limited to democratic change, presidency terms and checks and balances but it also includes how much latitude will be given to women, homosexuals, how much will change in the amount of Koran put in the readings in Arabic language in schools. Therefore reform is not only economic and political but also about values.

The seventh challenge is about the interdependence of issues. In a way that's very mind-boggling. Political science is about drawing political and strategic options in order for decisions to be taken, however now due to the complexity of issues- such as the Iraq, Palestinian, terrorism, and reform issue- makes the job of political scientists or advisors extremely difficult.

The eighth challenge is that we are into a process of a clash of civilization. Major debates have surrounded this issue but its certain that the image of the Middle East and specifically Arab countries are perceived in the west and the west perceived in our countries is not on the positive side. You can just look at the stereotypes of the Arab bomb men, Arab bazarmen, the Arab belly dancer, the Arab billionaire, the Arab Bedouin- or as Dr. Korany referred to as the five Bs- prevailing in the west and also I must say that the American cowboy, capitalist, client to Israel, colonialists is another 5 C's on the other side. These stereotypes are digging in the negative values.

In conclusion, the question remains what to do with these challenges in a time where there is a massive imbalance of power between the Middle East countries and the west.

I am not sure that I have an answer to such questions but let us try together to find some during this discussion.

The Middle East and New Challenges: Security and Political Aspects

Ambassador. Murat Bilhan[*]

First, I would like to differentiate between the terminologies used to define the Middle East, in order to be able to designate which countries would be seen fit for which roles of security in the region.

Do we mean here the classically defined Middle East and make our assumptions accordingly, or do we mean the "larger Middle East" as targeted by the extra-regional forces in general and the USA in particular? And if we pick up the latter, shall we confine ourselves with the South Caucasus, Iran, Pakistan and Afghanistan and stop at that border, or shall we include the whole area of the Islamic world, including the Central Asia and Southeast Asian countries such as Malaysia and Indonesia? So my statement should have a different meaning and interpretation in each case.

Second point to clarify would be to identify the challenges to this region, or perceived challenges from this region and their interrelationship vis-à-vis the outside world. And shall we take these challenges on the basis of how Americans and other outsiders perceive them, or on the basis of how the regional countries perceive them? Because these concepts are diametrically opposite. And then finally how Turkey perceives threat and risk from whom, and from which reaction and in the form and shape of what?

In the very short time assigned to my modest person I shall try to summarise my assessment as best as I can.

I had yesterday tried to emphasise the roles and responsibilities of Turkey and Egypt as the major powers and actors of this controversial region. Now whatever geographical definition you may take for the region, Turkey and Egypt are in this map and not only that but they are the focal points which will take some role, or would be considered as candidates for a given role. That means that they cannot wash their hands

[*] **Chairman of the Center for Strategic Research (SAM)**

from their responsibilities in the region, even if they want to. Their indifference would be detrimental for their and other's interests.

Now let's have a closer look at the region with American eyes;

- First consideration: the interests in securing the sources of energy for American sustainable consumption.
- Second consideration: American strategic interests to be safeguarded by allies and like-minded regional states.
- Third consideration: eliminating the sources of threat and risk to America, from this region, such as religious fundamentalism, proliferation of WMD, other violent criminal activity, which could be summarised under the single heading of "terrorism".

If we look at these concepts and risks from the other angle: What are the perceptions of threat and risk to the regional countries?

- First, any threats, external as well as internal to the regimes and thus stability in the region.
- Second, intervention by and violation of their rights, territorial integrity, sovereignty and independence by external powers.
- Third, exploitation of their economic resources including energy resources.

These are the main headings that can be considered as concepts of threats and risks by both sides. We can see that they are diametrically opposite. One side wants to control this area and directly influence the region as a sphere of influence and transfer it into a shape that would be acceptable for all parties. On the other hand, the other side is on a defensive stance and wants to protect its rights against the threats of change. Change is considered by one side as a recipe for the better and from the other side as a threat, so the main question is how can this be compensated.

We should see the perception of the extra-regional power other than America, do they agree on a common denominator that would transform the region .

There is a great resistance in the region for change, there are monarchies and republics and other forms of governments in this region

and they are resisting change. I am afraid that evidentially they would have to change but the question is how. Should they use the external dynamics and initiatives of change or depend only on internal dynamics. I presume that only internal dynamics are preferable and more desirable but whether they would be enough to start and continue this transformation is a question mark.

In the case of Turkey, we see that internal dynamics were not enough for transformation and the EU as an external dynamics was the force behind transformation that twisted Turkey's arms into accepting many transformation in several different packages.

Four out of five people in the world belong to five nations our groups who presently shape the world: USA, EU, China, Russia and India. China and India alone have a population of one out of two persons in the world are either Indian or Chinese. If we look bilaterally at the relations between for example China and the US their interests converge in many fields such as containing Russia, controlling Central Asia, large trade...etc. China has interest to put balances between the US and India due to the Chinese-India rivalry in Central Asia and against Russian expansion in the region. China complains about Islamic fundamentalism spreading and infiltrating into its boarders and trying to spark a separatist movement inside thus they unite with the Americans in blaming this larger Middle East area for all there evils. While India also directs the same blame with Kashmir and Russia with Chechnya

. Thus all these nations have a common denominator, and it is not only America that claims this region is evil. Therefore, how long can this weak poor and dependent on western technology region resist? Should it resist?

The crux of the problem is that we should decide to change and adjust ourselves to global values, which are not necessarily western values. Then we must activate the internal dynamics and use them so they would not be used against us. This is my proposal that must be discussed without losing much time to activate and vitalize these internal dynamic and to convince our leadership, governments and NGO's by whatever means to train our people to have the firsthand in all domestic maters so no one would interfere in them. Family problems should be solved within the family if possible, if not the police will intervene as we saw happening in Afghanistan and Iraq.

The Middle East and New Challenges: Economic and Cultural Aspects

Dr. Sema Kalaycıoğlu[*]

Introduction

The Middle East (ME) is a vast geographic area, which consists of countries of the Arab Maghreb and Mashrek, Israel, Turkey, Pakistan; Afghanistan and in some definitions India. The most recent definition of the Greater Middle East even includes countries of Central Asia and the Caucasus. In this presentation only the Arab Middle East and Turkey will be under investigation to determine what kind of cultural and economic challenges there are for countries in the region. The global economic challenges of the region in general will also be focused on. What kind of initiatives there are to overcome challenges and what opportunities are linked to those challenges will be another area of investigation. Possibility of a sound cooperation between sub regional countries, especially between Egypt and Turkey to meet the challenges will also be discussed.

Common History: Obstacle or Opportunity for the Middle East

Countries of the ME share a long history of trade links, which dates centuries back when much of trade in the region was internal.1 In fact, there once was an integrated system of trade and commerce in the area until the British and French divided it into separate states put up border crossings and initiated cumbersome customs restrictions among them.2 However, despite their common history, common historical economic and commercial practices, the Middle East never regained the necessary and sufficient elements to integrate among themselves to take advantage of an era, which fully indicates benefits of cooperation and

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[1] Kalaycioglu, Sema (2001) "Turkey's Economic Prospects in the Middle East" paper presented at the Middle East Studies Association (MESA) Conference in November in San Francisco: 115

[2] McCarthy, Justin (2001) The Ottoman Peoples and the End of the Ottoman Empire, Arnold, London: 186.

association with such examples as the European Union. Therefore, countries of the Middle East have long been suffering from a negative integration syndrome.

The countries of the ME have always been in a state of relative deprivation so far as globalization is concerned. There have been various attempts of integration and cooperation in the Middle East since the 1950s. Nevertheless, most regional organizations that have been established proved to be ill born,. and have failed to create concrete results.

When factors that lead to disintegration among the countries of the ME are viewed, one finds out that there are eight important obstacles, each of which either work simultaneously or consecutively to ensure failure.

. The administrative systems are chaotic and corrupt;

. The political climate for reform and cooperation is unsupportive;

. The confidence among the ruling elites is shaky;

. The historical wounds are yet unhealed;

. The level of economic development is low;

. The economic diversification is limited, and the level of sophistication is unattained;

. The foreign economic relations are vertically clustered according to previous colonial ties. Consequently inter- regional trade and intra-industry trade are insignificant;

. The physical infrastructure, which facilitates integration among the MENMC is insufficient or incomplete.

Under the existing constraints reiterated above, countries of the ME can hardly cooperate. They mostly compete and or get engaged in political frictions among themselves. Absence or insufficiency of incentives to develop common economic and political interests keep them from taking collective actions against endogenous evils like local social unrest; or exogenous evils like border conflicts and/or wars and foreign invasions. Therefore, the common regional history brings more challenges then opportunities to the ME. Since there are hardly ever

shared economic interests, the cause of Palestine and Northern Cyprus is not truly supported by Arab countries. They did not fully stand behind the Iraqi interests against the United States either. In fact foreign invasion in Iraq benefited Kuwait and Saudi Arabia economically, when both countries have been granted investment and business contracts in the restructuring of the Iraqi economy. Although invading coalition forces are condemned in rhetoric, a collective action has not been truly taken against them.

Global Economic Challenges of the Middle East: New is an Old Story

Globalization practically means trade and capital account liberalization and integration of national markets with the international ones. Benefiting from the age of information and knowledge through penetration of high technologies in all spheres of life; closing of the digital divide with the developed world are other direct impacts of globalization. With the exception of Turkey and Israel in the region, and despite the infitah initiatives in many Arab countries, no other country in the ME truly accomplished trade and capital account liberalization. This fact have worked as a shield against global financial crises, and protected the region from getting contaminated. However, the ME has not become an important part of the world economic system either. Despite the level of high trade openness of most countries in the region, and with the exception of oil trade, the ME has neither been among the top three most trading regions in the world, nor has any country in the region been among the top 25 world exporters. So far as the world equity and foreign direct investments are concerned, the ME does not qualify as one of the luckiest geographies either. This is because of the fact that the region is politically instable, and the business environment in the ME is not considered as hospitable for foreign investment. The former alone constitutes a major challenge for the region. The later is a inevitable consequence of regional micro and macro economic deficiencies.

The most important micro economic deficiency appears to be related to low factor productivity in the ME, which is a consequence of lack or insufficiency of formal, technical and professional education. Despite the availability of young and dynamic population insufficiency of skilled human resources prevents most ME countries to break their

development barriers. The factor productivity in general and the labor productivity in particular are so low in the ME, the low factor costs do not attract foreign investors to beat another, but yet equally important challenge of low levels of domestic savings in most of the ME economies. This fact is also true for Turkey.

In countries, where diversification of resources allows diversification of production through industrialization, choice of production remains in labor-intensive sectors like textiles and handicrafts. Nevertheless, even in such sectors, the emergence of East Asian competitors creates natural barriers for the ME producers to get greater shares of world markets. Services have their own specific episodes. While Gulf Arabs show avid competitiveness in financial services and use their competitive edge to diversify their economies to include sector specific advantages beyond their oil sectors. Egypt, Jordan and Turkey have natural comparative advantages in tourism. However, regional and local instability constantly interfere with their success in rendering the service. Therefore they cannot enjoy benefits of their natural advantages. Inefficient utilization of resources, which is another human resources and management related problem in the region, also acts as a barrier against their natural competitiveness in such sectors.

The macro economic deficiencies start with the gap between the investment need and domestic savings. It is followed by high and chronic unemployment in most ME economies. The ME economies heavily depend on importation of food products, raw materials, intermediary products, machinery and equipment. As a result high and chronic trade and current account deficits often accompany their high trade openness. Lack or insufficiency of physical infrastructure, properly functioning economic and social institutions, and legal systems also create obstacles to the economic development of the region. The existence of unregistered sectors prevents regional countries from harmonizing their customs rules and regulations with one another. As a result trade policy coordination cannot be accomplished.

Many of the ME countries are still heavily controlled by their public sectors. Private sectors only flourish at the mercy of their public counterparts. Therefore, the sources of economic change are primarily under the monopolistic power of public sectors in the region. As a consequence this often corrupts political power, and leads to inefficient or

wasteful use of already limited resources in the region. The "crony capitalism", which can be best described as private initiatives supported by the public authority upon subjective choices rather than merit, prevents the formation of efficiently functioning market systems. This is another major challenge, which generates inequality among social classes. The social inequality in the region nurtures political instability. The regional political instability prevents the regional countries from economic modernization, and the vicious circles cannot easily be broken.

The ME does not have an innovative culture in general. Regional countries with the exception of Israel do not invest in Research and Development sufficiently. They simply take advantage of new technologies as much as they can. However, not being able to create, learn, copy or absorb high and/or medium high technologies and the necessary knowledge that comes with them make regional countries face another old dilemma of not being able to keep pace with technological innovation. The challenges of the ME can be summarized in the following chart (Chart 1)

Chart 1: Challenges of the Middle East

Economic Challenges	**Cultural Challenges**
Low Productivity	Lack of Cooperative Culture
Inefficient and Wasteful use of Resources	Lack of Innovative Culture
Insufficient Human Resources: High population Growth but low Literacy	Lack of Confidence- General distrust to others
Inadequate Savings	Favoritism, Clientelism, Nepotism; Disregarding of Merit
Insufficiency of Foreign Investment	Prejudices Against Neighbors
	Insufficiency or Absence of Democratic Culture[**]; Close

[*] Limam Imed ((2003), Challenges and Reforms of Economic Regulation in MENA Countries, The American University in Cairo Press, Cairo, New York, p: 39

Lack of Product and Trade Partner Diversification	Association with Autocratic Political Ambitions
Low level of Economic Development	Assertion of Leadership
Insufficient Physical Infrastructure	Lack of Ability or Desire to Heal the Wounds of the Past
Heavy dependence on Imports	Lack or Insufficiency of Organizational, Management or Governance Skills or Tendencies
Insufficient Investment in Research and Development	Expecting Everything from the State – Lack of Self or Community initiative
Existing Income Disparities among Economic Groups	Enjoying being Free riders
Rent - seeking Behavior; Long Tradition of Anti-production bias[*]	Favoring Friction or Conflict instead of Consensus or Compromise
Generally remaining behind Global Trends in terms of Technology and Institutional adjustment	
Negative Economic Integration Syndrome	

Cooperation in the Region to Overcome Economic and Cultural Challenges

It is ironical to talk about cooperation in a region, which does not have much cooperative culture to start with. Therefore, although it seems to be a remedy for most difficulties, cooperation is usually not a plausible option for countries of the Middle East to break the barriers, which are set by challenges they have to face. As it was indicated in the first part of this paper lack of confidence among the regional countries prevents them from building sustainable economic and political relations. Therefore,

** ibid.

before any cooperative attempt in any economic and/or political sphere, countries must work on mutual confidence building. No matter how many treaties and agreements are signed and authorized even cultural cooperation cannot fulfill its objective, when there is lack of confidence among the regional countries.

There must be ways for the ME countries to overcome historical animosities and heal historical wounds, which have been deeply engraved even in the folk culture. It may not be possible to eradicate the deep-rooted hatred, which is also often nurtured by extra regional partners of the regional countries completely. However, since traditionally antagonistic and rival nations of Europe overcame the bitter memories the most recent history, and established the most successful model of integration of all times, countries of the ME must be able to have similar accomplishments if not identical. Unrealistic expectations of cooperation must also be avoided.

According to the economic criteria of the theory of cooperation (integration) only complementary economies of similar or close economic development levels may engage in regional cooperation. Therefore, country pairs and/or trios, with similar economic backgrounds must be selected for cooperation in the region. Egypt and Turkey are among the most likely country pairs for cooperation. The two countries have the necessary factor endowments, product and trade diversification and sectoral sophistication levels for a sound sub-regional cooperation to be established. However, a bilateral free trade agreement must be immediately signed between them to promote economic relations. A free trade area and/or a customs union seem too ambitious to implement even for Egypt and Turkey. Sectoral cooperation may give promising options for both countries to create economies of scale in manufacturing and services sectors and may prove successful results. Egypt and Turkey may cooperate to explore new markets and they may sign agreements to incorporate their sectors with greater competitiveness to take advantage of economies of scale in trade as well. Turkey has been a member of the EU customs union since 1996 and Egypt has a free trade agreement with it. However, beyond the Multi fiber quota restrictions they face in the world markets, Egypt and Turkey face non-tariff barriers especially in textiles and clothing in the EU markets. They may increase their shares of

exports to the EU and the world markets by cooperation[3] especially after the abolition of multi-fiber quotas in 2005. Jordan, Syria and Tunisia promise to be next best candidates to participate in sectoral cooperation with Egypt and Turkey.

Capacity building in infrastructure is another area where Egypt and Turkey can join their efforts together to complete a regional electricity grid and interconnected lines; natural gas and oil pipeline systems; oil exploration and drilling; railroads, highways, direct marine routes and airline connections. Such projects may be valuable for the entire ME as a region. Environment is another area, where both countries can cooperate against, deforestation, desertification, pollution and sustainable community building in cities and rural areas; education and health sectors hold potentialities for cooperation as well. Egypt and Turkey have been involved in ambitious regional development, irrigation and electrification projects.. The South Eastern Anatolian Project (SEAP) of Turkey and the Toshka project of Egypt can be incorporated to transfer information and share experiences between the two regional countries.

In the political sphere however, cooperation has limited horizons due to the fact that political leaders in the region have their own personal agenda of ambitions and aspirations. Furthermore the general faith in political cooperation is very so low that even a well institutionalized group of the League of Arab Nations finds itself in the middle of financial crises. They even do not have the ability to have their 21 members to pay their membership contributions on time.[4] One may contend that as two regional powers, Egypt and Turkey might have not yet exhausted their options to help restore peace and order in the Eastern Mediterranean. However, one should remember that both Egypt and Turkey have their short comings. Egypt could not perform any better than other Arab countries to bring solution to the problem of instability, even under the League of Arab Nations. Amending the role of the Arab League, and activating issues of the Beirut Summit are continuously talked about. Yet, so far no significant progress is observable to reactivate vital issues concerning Iraq or any other ME problem. Neither Egypt nor

[3] Kheir-El –Din Hanna (2003)"Implementing the Agreement on Textiles and Clothing in the Mediterrean Region" in Imed Limam,pp:213-233

[4] Arabicnews.com 27.02.04

any other country in the League Arab Nations could take firm action on Israel- Palestine conflict either. Turkey could not prevent the military intervention of the allied forces to Iraq. She only managed to avoid sending military troops to the Northern Iraq. Contrary the general belief in the Arab world, Turkey does not have much leverage over the disputed Golan Heights, and over the Israel- Palestine conflict. However, she offered her services to play an intermediation role in the Israel-Syria peace negotiations. To my contention it is just a gesture of good will to both countries and does not necessarily have a strong prospect. Turkey can be an impartial observer during the negotiations at the best.

It is a sheer fact that Egypt and Turkey do not have much leverage over the thorny issues of the ME. However, they may help one another to stay out of the regional conflict and extend humanitarian and technical aid as much as they could to countries and communities in need. To accomplish such solidarity, they must avoid competing with each other for regional leadership. Instead, they must create an atmosphere for cooperative leadership with the notion of "regional crises management".

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Guest Intervention

Ambassador. Fathy El Shazly*

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen, Since I left the service of the Egyptian Government in June 2003, I have taken part in many public events such as: Lecturing, Appearing in Radio & TV programs, talking to Journalists and participating in workshops. Nevertheless the exercise of this evening belongs to a completely different category. I gave my assignment of today a thorough consideration and a lot of thinking proportionate to the great importance of the issues at stake. It was with enthusiasm and passion that I did so, due first to my belief in the centrality of the roles Egypt and Turkey are to play in charting the course and carving the contours of the future of the so called Middle East, and second, very simply because I like Turkey and the Turks.

Before assuming the look and language of an old hand supposedly ripened by experience, I wish to extend to our Turkish guests my heartfelt welcome and tell them how delighted I am to see in Cairo these familiar and friendly faces.

While preparing my speech for this evening, I had to go back to some writings of relevance that were publıshed in the aftermath of the events of September 2002. I reread Samuel Huntington's article in Newsweek Davos edition in Feb entitled "The age of Muslim wars "in which he spoke about a wave of violence pitting Muslims against each other and against the West.

In the same issue of Newsweek, I read Francis Fukuyama's "The real enemy" in which he claimed that radical Islamists were the Fascists of modern world and appeared as accrediting Ossama Bin Laden as a legitimate representative of Islam. I went through Farid Zakaria's recipe in December 2001 on how to reform the Arab World in which he claims that FOTA or the "fear of the Alternative" paralyzed American Foreign Policy in the Middle East. He claims that Islamic fundamental parties are more popular than the ruling regimes but they are also sham democrats. They would happily come to power through an election but then set up their own dictatorship. It would then be one man, one vote one time. He

* Ex -Ambassador-Egyptian Ministry of Foreign Affairs

calls for not immediately installing democratic practices in the Middle East but only setting up the precondition for Democracy or what he calls "Constitutional liberalism ". He then calls for economic reforms that would help create a dynamic business class that would in turn help consolidate freedoms and Democracy.

I read also publications of Rand:"The impact of September 11 on US policy in the Middle East & Transatlantic Relations" Oct 2002. And lastly I went through two Brookings papers, one carrying an evaluation of the Bush National Security State and the other was a Peter Warren Singer contribution to a project on US policy towards the Islamic World after 11 Sep 2001. I found a strong kin relationship between all those writings and specially the last paper published in Sep 2002 and the salvo of reform designs that have been recently coming our direction.

Singer's paper starts by challenging an essential bargain that has in his views been shaping for several decades American Foreign Policy towards the Islamic World, that was " As long as stability and other strategic US interests were met, the US was willing to support the status quo and not push for political and economic reforms in the Islamic World ". He speaks at length of what he describes as "The general failure of the State" in the Islamic World that exposed the status quo long supported by the US in front of the common Muslims. He also claims that the US is increasingly viewed as an inherently biased player against Palestinians and Muslims by extension. He raises a host of very pertinent questions regarding this issue then urges for the renewal of the Peace Process and an end to the Israeli Palestinian violence. As the radical Islamic forces often dominate the limited numbers of groups that operate outside the State in the Islamic World, the US should find according to him ways and means to aid the growth of" Positive" civil society forces in the Islamic World without causing undue or counterproductive interference. He singles out education as a prime example of the hurdles frustrating modernization. In certain Islamic countries the deterioration of the public school system led to a take over by Islamic religious schools or Madrassah, which turned to be a kind of nurseries for potential terrorists. He turns to Muslim minorities who are interlinked with the wider Islamic World and a part of the global commons. As the pain- in one part- of the Umma is increasingly felt across the wider Muslim community, those Muslim minorities may cause troubles in their host societies. Therefore

he calls on the US policy makers to talk to US allies and friends in the Philippines, the Balkans and elsewhere on how to stop alienating Muslim minorities and to do their best towards integrating them

Many common traits could be easily identified in all those writing: Together the religion of Islam and the conditions under which Muslims have been living create an environment tolerant with -if not nourishing- terrorism. That is because of its choices and policies -local and regional - the US attracts the wrath of Muslim terrorists. That in order to eradicate terrorism, a westernized process of reforming Islamic societies and states and improving their conditions of living should be embarked upon with urgency, and prompt solutions should be found without delay to chronic conflicts causing confrontations between Muslims on one side and allies and friends of the US on the other such as the Israeli Palestinian conflict.

I firmly believe that nobody could argue against the pressing need for reform in the Islamic World. In Turkey as well as in Egypt a multifaceted process of reform has been launched since the Eighties of the last century. I have always maintained that a precondition for the success and survival of societal developments is that they come from within. An attempt to rush into imposing cultural uniformity are against the thrust of history. A uniform global outfit cut and trimmed according to the measurements dictated by the new World order may result in withdrawal and repulsion. In the era of information technology what could and should be done is to deploy technological innovations for the propagation of a multifaceted plural culture common to all religions.

Now we have a detailed prescription arrived at last week in Alexandria by 151 high caliber personalities representing the non-governmental society and the whole political, social and cultural spectrum in 18 Arab countries. I hope that this prescription will be taken seriously and implemented by Arab countries

Allow me now to put up some suggestions for possible common action that could be taken by Egypt and Turkey

1. Many years before the Western countries realized the global dimension of terrorism, Egypt and Turkey had been suffering from that plague. In the spring of Ambassador Onur Oymen the then Undersecretary of the Turkish Foreign Ministry and myself agreed on a common paper to be submitted to the Euromed countries. In

December 2001 our European partners decided to accelerate their efforts to agree on a common definition of the terrorist crime and to adopt common warrants and measures against it. Very recently, in the wake of the Madrid explosions this process received a new momentum. The two countries should find out what Europeans have agreed upon, build on what has been achieved and coordinate their positions within the partnership and beyond, regarding international efforts to eradicate terrorism.

For several years now President Mubarak's initiative for the convening of an International Conference on terrorism stands without appropriate response. I believe that such a conference would fill in the many holes still existing in the body of international law on terrorism

2. In 1999 the Foreign Ministers of the two countries agreed to start a joint effort to confront the malicious campaign trying to create a forged link between Islam and terrorism and to reveal to the followers of other religions and civilizations the real wise, moderate and tolerant face of our great religion. It is high time to move forward on this ground.

3. Egypt and Turkey are active members of the Organization of the Islamic Conference. For four years was Egypt's permanent representative to the OIC. For me this Organization -which was created as a reaction to the arson of Al Aqsa Mosque in 1969 - achieved very little and needs a great deal of restructuring .

Within this context, I think that the secretariat should immediately create a unit for the dialogue between religions and cultures. Such dialogue should start first between different factions and regions of the Islamic World in order to form a common perception before dialoguing with the others. The anti terrorism code of ethics approved by the Organization should be transformed into a binding instrument. The two countries should coordinate their views on these issues

4. One of the papers I consulted called on NATO to launch a Mediterranean Partnership for Peace. I think that Turkey should immediately formulate its own ideas regarding this proposal and talk it over with Egypt

5. At least twice during the last few months on the Egyptian Nile TV I refuted a claim defining the relations between Turkey and Israel as a

strategic alliance. I have maintained that for Turkey, Israel is merely an armament supplier and that neither of the two is willing to burden its regional relations with the enmities of the other. I have referred to the recent history of relations between Turkey, Syria and Iran on one hand and between Israel, Greece and Greco Cypriots on the other. After the recent irresponsible behavior of the Israeli Government I feel that a healthy Middle Eastern Turkish Policy requires calling things by their proper names and issuing a detailed public policy paper may be a good idea.

6. Rehabilitating Iraq and expediting its return to normalcy in one piece and on peaceful and friendly terms with its neighbors is another area of common interest. Egypt's Geographic position that kept it from being an immediate neighbor of Iraq would give added credibility in front of the Iraqis to any Egyptian favored regional approach.

7. The regional security structure of the Middle East in the post peace era and the possible roles in the new architecture of regional power, World Community, European Union and NATO should be thought of between the two countries. Concerning what specificities should be taken care of; what new organs should be set up, and what new instruments should be agreed upon.

8. The two countries should exchange views on how to develop the textural and structural characteristics of our region and launch a process of regional consultations towards that end. In this context I wish to welcome the request by Turkey to be granted the observer membership of the Arab League. In the meantime I believe that Turkey may apply for the associate accession to a number of important and relevant Arab conventions such as the Anti Terrorism Convention and the Agreement on facilitating the transit trade

9. Promoting the bilateral relations between the two countries is in itself a contribution to regional stability.

While serving as Egypt's Ambassador to Turkey until a year ago, I was able to identify many new venues for cooperation in Defense Industries, Energy، Trade, Agriculture and Tourism. I was also able to have a piece of land ready with utilities and services plotted to Turkish industrialists free of charge in Kena governorate to establish themselves there, get the Egyptian origin and penetrate COMESA markets. I

suggested that Cairo and Istanbul stock markets enter into cooperation to help the success of the privatization drive in the two countries, expand the market for tourism investments and set up a regional observatory for investment opportunity, capital movement and economic and financial crises early warning mechanism .Theses ideas and others should be taken seriously and developed for the common good of our two peoples.

Finally I wish to invite the organizers of this workshop to agree on an agenda of meetings to expand the scope and further the dialogue on the different aspect of bilateral and regional issues. I wish here to recall the agreement I reached three years ago with the President of the Islamic Bank for Development to have a workshop on developing economic relations between Egypt and Turkey financed by the Bank. An idea I submitted to the two government unfortunately with little response.

DISCUSSIONS

Dr. Bahgat Korany – (Head of session)- Professor of Political Science- American University in Cairo

I have a few remarks regarding the presentations in this session. Concerning Dr Sema Kalaycioglu's paper, we actually are making a shift from high politics—military and diplomatic issues- towards economic and cultural issues. I would like to emphasis looking at the Middle East in a multidimensional aspect. It is a fact that even the discipline of economics has changed. We no longer just talk about trade but also the digital economy and the e-commerce, which is now one of the fastest growing sectors of the international economy. We no longer talk about comparative advantage, which was supposed to be the basis of the international trade theory; instead we talk about competitive advantage.

As for the presentation of Ambassador. Fathy El Shazly who combines scholarship with practice, I believe that Ambassadors think more or less of bilateral relations unlike academics who think much more in terms of the region. Perhaps in terms of thinking of bilateral relations the two focal countries could be a good start especially since Ambassador Shazli has gone beyond the challenges to present recommendations to cope with them, I think he realized that we have emphasized too much on the number of challenges and it is time to think of specific ways to cope with them.

In this sense I can see two major issues: The first is the strategic pivitolness of both Turkey and Egypt. The second is what these two countries can do together to initiate the process of reform. I suppose that if they combine efforts they can redirect the region towards one orientation rather than another.

The second issue is about the agenda to cope with the challenges facing the Middle East as mentioned by Dr. Abdel Monem Saeed and Dr. Sema. I can see that they deal essentially with the challenge of coping with threats whether internal or external, traditional threats or as what we call in international relations as hi- politics military and diplomatic or low –politics; economic and cultural and here we have lots of possibilities to choose from.

Dr. Meliha Altunisik
Associate Professor- Middle East Technical University

My question is for Dr. Abdel Monem Saeed: You identified the conflict with the USA a as clash of civilization, I am really concerned about this concept becoming a self fulfilling prophecy, therefore to what extent should we identify this conflict in a clash of civilization terminology. I was wondering why you made that jump from conflict with the USA to clash of civilizations.

Dr. Nadia Mostafa- Director of the CPRS

I would like Dr. Abdel Monem Saaed to elaborate on the questions that he terminated his presentation with since this concluding session is dedicated to giving answers therefore I am eager to know your opinion about the possible alternatives.

My second remark is for Ambasador. Murat Bilhan , you said that the region is resisting change, but the question is: who in the region are resisting such a change. I think that we must differentiate between the regimes and people. You have implied that there is no possibility of resisting, but resisting what and by whom? There are many areas of resistance, one of which is political change yet there remain other areas.

I would like to thank you Dr. Sema for your thorough analysis, In my opinion I believe that the cultural challenges are more important than the economic, because the cultural is an input that affects the economic and political levels.

Finally Ambassador. ElShazly, you have moved us from the global level of analysis to an alternative of bilateral action, which deserves to be studied and thought about carefully

Dr. Abdel Monem Saeed

When I read the whole outline of this symposium I noticed that the main factor is 9-11, thus its the focal point or independent variable which we have to measure and I think that from here lies the solution of the question: how are we recognized as Arabs or as Middle Easterners.

Coming to grips with 9-11 and not looking from the western conspiracy perspective towards the Arab world is the beginning of the solution because this will result in a different view on issues such as the use of suicide bombing, the term jihad issue as a conceptual, not only a religious terms but a security term as well.

The Arab world never came to a serious open discussion about these issues because of their sensitivity such as the Palestinian issues, the Israeli suppression of the Palestinians, our history, decolonolization process. Therefore until now we haven't come to grips with 9-11 as an event in terms of who attacked, who was attacked and the possibilities it opened. We either talk about the event as a fact or as a separate individual factor and we never take into serious consideration how – for example- the indians, chinese or americans view it.

Also how we calculate the issues related to the balance of power and learning from the experiences of others that were – untill very recently-like us such as the Chinese model .

At the same time, in the absense of finding a solution to deal with these challenges we find ourselves in a slope. When measuring Egyptian American relations we find that both countries in the last 25 years had very close relations. In fact I can say that Egypt benefitted more and built stonger alliances with the USA in comparision with Turkey. However after 9-11 I believe that Egyptian -American relations are going into a decline, not only in terms of disagreeing with each other over issues such as refusing to open its boarders to US forces when attacking Iraq. If you add Saudi Arabia then we are definitely entering a slope because whether we like it or not at this moment the USA is the main global superpower and it will remain so for sometime to come. So how is that formulated? It is formulated within a value differences not a strategic differences regarding the position of Israel in the region or participating or not in the campaign against Iraq. I believe that the issue is no longer binded in strategic values differences but it is an issue of cultural values and differences. Thus are we producing terrorists? Are we boiling in our schools, media, and mosques enough hate towards the USA or not?

Ambassador Murat Bilhan- Chairman of the Center for Strategic Research (SAM)

Regarding Dr. Nadia Mostafa's question concerning clarifying the concept of " resistance" we should differentiate between two main tides. In internal politics of any country there are the conservatives and there are the progressists. The conservatives are always representing the establishment; they would like to keep their rights and interests untouched as for the progressists they want to change this balance.

Now the region- as described by the Americans- is resisting the intervention of external aggression to keep and preserve its identity and establishment against any encroachment and this is a normal logic because any human being would like his home to be inviolable. But in our present ages the world is turning and you can not change the tide of change in the world. There are certain rising values in the world and these values -whether we like them or not -will be made accepted by us because that is the direction the world is headed in. This inevitable tide of change should be made pleasant for us by using the internal dynamics not external forces; our nations have dignity and ancient history unlike American history, which is only 250 years old.

Historically, we are more experienced, we should know how to manipulate and we should know were our interests are. So our interest is not keeping and preserving these obsolete values which I have distinguished between good and bad traditions - attributed unjustly to Islam - that we should get rid of and commit ourselves to a model globalized value system thus the mentality transformation is necessary.

Dr. Sema Kalaycioglu

Answering Dr. Nadia Mostafa's question, I think that economic and cultural challenges are equally effective. Rather than culture of compromise and consensus we have a culture of conflict.

As for diplomats favoring bilateralism, this is the age of regionalism and regional integration around the world. I see in the Middle East a deprivation of regional arrangements therefore we must work on creating regional ties that is why I favor sectorial cooperation.

Ambassador. Fathy ElShazly

I wish to make a brief comment on Dr. Meliha. I don't think that Dr. Abdel Monem Saeed is the one who defined what happened on 9-11 as a kind of clash of civilizations. Infact this is the conclusion reached when you read the articles of Fukuyama or Hungtington when commenting about what happened. Therefore an imposing question: Would our perception influence the Western view towards this issue.

I agree with Dr. Abdel Monem Saeed concerning the so-called global security. What happened on 9-11 is the globalization of what I called a the concept of comprehensive security and that the management of the American reaction to it would not be successful without cooperative security but I can see also a deformity in the American perception of security in becoming global and that is the implication of the Palestinian Israeli conflict.

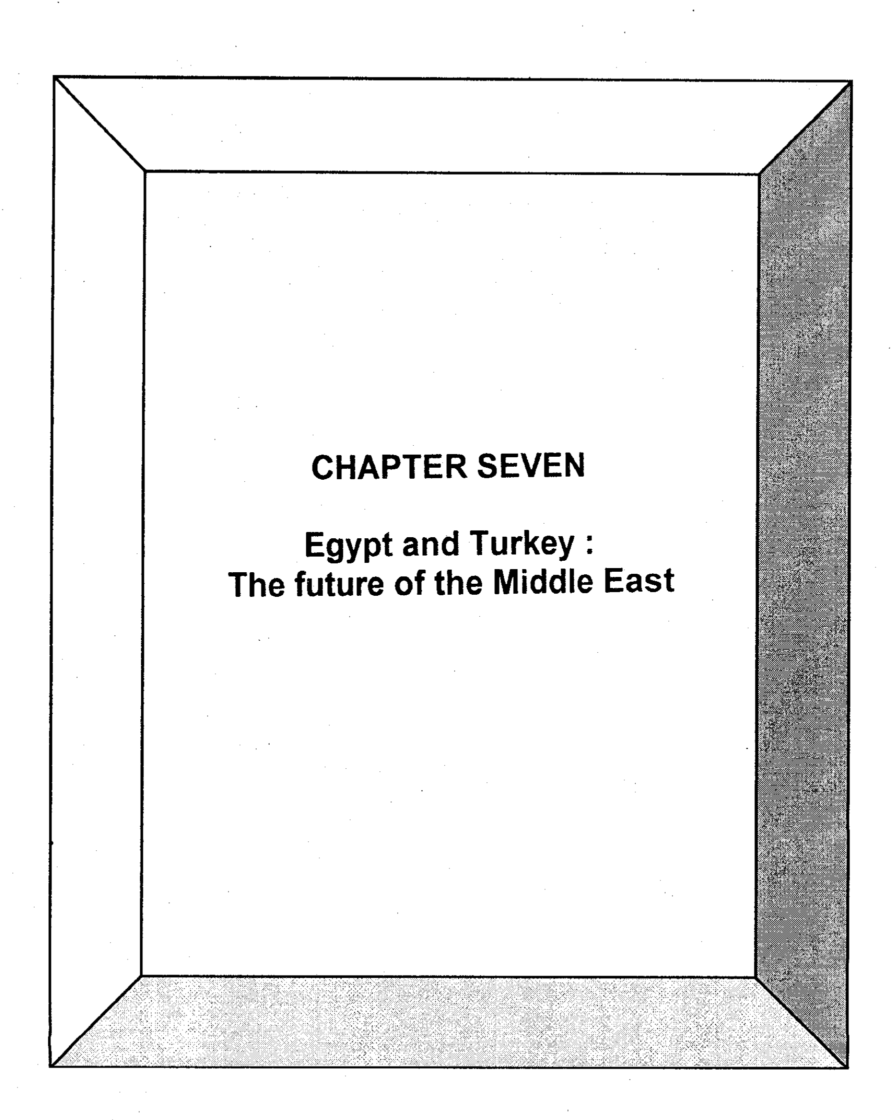
I think that Ambassador. Bilhan was right in referring to the resistance in the region towards reform. I would like to refer you all to the actions of the leaders in our region. They immediately rejected the designs of reforms without knowing the content of those designs. When I went through the Alexandria document, I found very great similarities to what we heard in the American perceptions, designs and recipes etc...

Dr. Bahgat Korany
Professor of Political Science- American University in Cairo

Concerning the clash of civilization, the book of Huntington – in my opinion-is a bad book containing very little academic context. What is important about that book is that Huntington is going from clash of civilizations to clash of civilizations within the US by attacking the ethnic groups within the US. This is verging on racial aspects and that is very serious.

I noticed that among the different challenges mentioned throughout the presentation of both Dr AbdelMonem Saaed and Ambassador. Bilhan agreed on the ranking of internal and cultural challenges as the most important ones. I suggest that we must have a

meeting between Turkish and Egyptian think tanks to discuss many issues that appear in the region, which can open new directions in the perception of the Middle East.



CHAPTER SEVEN

Egypt and Turkey : The future of the Middle East

Egypt and Turkey and the future of the Middle East: Turkish perspective*

Dr.Hayder Gunvar **

In my presentation, I will address The Turkish perspective towards the future of the Middle East. Turkey gives great importance to the Middle East because of its historical, cultural, and social relations as well as its important geopolitical situation; therefore, Turkey is affected by all positive or negative developments that happen in the Middle East.

Turkey believes that maintaining peace and security in the Middle East will lead to the fulfillment of interests in the region. Also, creating an atmosphere of trust will help and allow for the development of cooperative relations especially in the economic field. Hence, Turkey has always supported the peace process in the Middle East based on the Security Council resolutions concerning the Israeli –Palestinian conflict. Also Turkey gives great importance to the creation of a permanent and just peace in the region.

Concerning Turkish relations with Israel, it is not aimed against any country; we are convinced that the cooperation between Turkey and Israel will contribute to the stability of the region as well as enhancing the peace process and regional cooperation. Turkey is one of the first countries to acknowledge a Palestinian state and it strongly supports the Palestinian cause.

Turkey has recorded in the past few years increased development in its relations with Arab countries. In this regard there are continuous mechanisms of political consultancies between Turkey and Jordan as well as with Egypt and there are reciprocal visits on the political level between Turkey and the Gulf states. Also Turkey gives great attention to Iraq after the recent developments, and supports the integrity of Iraqi land and the importance of establishing a stable government.

*** Transcript of the presentation given by Dr.Hayder Gunvar**

**** Head of Department, SAM (Former Counselor-General in Alexandria**

If we look at the Turkish Syrian relations, we find that in the field of cooperation on the security level we have signed a treaty on the 20th of October 1998 that ended problems that were negatively affecting our bilateral relations. In addition, there are positive developments in economic relations between both countries.

As for the Greater Middle East project and the Turkish stance, we find that Turkey is the only secular democratic state in the region therefore the question remains: Shouldn't Turkey play a role model in this project?

Turkey will always be ready to cooperate with countries in the region in the interest of the people, since it knows very well that without this cooperation political change in the region would be impossible.

Turkey and Egypt
Two Leading Powers in the Middle East Policy

Counselor Hossam El Din Kassem Essa*

It is indeed my pleasure to attend this important colloquial in this renowned institution to speak about influential powers on both regional and international arenas.

First of all, I must tell you that on the personal level, being here is a realization of an old dream which is to join the Faculty of Economics and Political Sciences. Unfortunately, my high- school grades did not help, as they were not high enough. So being here today is a compensation in that respect.

I must also tell you that speaking about Turkey is a very simulating topic for me as the Director of Southern Europe and Balkans Department at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. My department covers 10 European countries: Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Serbia-Montenegro, Romania, Bulgaria, Malta, Cyprus, Macedonia and Turkey. By far, the most important among those countries is Turkey. There are many factors behind this priority, as it is Turkey alone that can be considered Asian, Middle-Eastern, as well as a European country. It has cultural, historical, geographical, and ethnic as well as social relations with all these regions

In the Middle East, the topic of our seminar, Turkey is considered by some as a successful example of a modern Muslim Middle Eastern country; it is looked upon as a neighbor and a strategic ally, by others as an adversary.

In Egypt, we find in the present regional and international circumstances a unique chance to formulate a new sort of relationship between Turkey and its southern neighbors, due to the following factors:

1- The Global war against terrorism, in which both countries are in the same camp, namely the camp of moderation in the Muslim

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world that seeks to prove that Islam and modernity are compatible not contradictory terms

2- **Both counties have suffered from the scourge of terrorism and have been targets of several terrorist attacks**

3- **Regionally speaking the Middle East is a crossroads where political and economic reforms are the slogans of the day, and outside powers are coming up with several formulas for that reform, linking it with their national security.**

4- **Both countries- given their weight as well as their regional and international relations -are considered effective players in the region with ample room for action in settling regional problems**

All those factors, in our view, have been conductive to closer Egyptian- Turkish positions, and to more coordination about the region's most important problems, including: -
Iraq: which is considered one of the most important issues for both countries. For Turkey, Iraq is of vital strategic importance. Both countries have long common boarders as well as common water resources.

Ethnically, Iraq is home to millions of Turcomans, and millions of Kurds. Both ethnic groups are directly related to Turkey and have relations with their fellow groups inside the Turkish territories. Consequently, Turkey has a very firm and clear –cut position about the future of new Iraq:

- Support for unity and territorial sovereignty of an Iraq where all ethnic and religious groups are represented.
- Equality of all Iraqi citizens regardless of creed, ethnicity, and geographical location
- Rejecting any political system based on ethnic lines or granting constituencies political powers that may weaken the center of the state.
- An active role for Iraq's neighbors in helping the Iraqis rebuild their country and reform its political system.
- Those are precisely the broad lines of the Egyptian position on the future of Iraq. That convergence of positions provides both

countries with an ample opportunity for coordination and joint action either on bilateral or regional levels.

Both countries are members of "the forum of Iraq's neighboring countries" that meet on regular basis to coordinate their efforts and positions about that country.

Iraq has also been an important topic on the agenda of bilateral meetings between both countries officials including the visit of H.E President Mubarak to Turkey last month

The situation in the Middle East

Both Turkey and Egypt have security as well as economic interest in the stability and peaceful settlement in the Middle East. Turkey has several strategic economic projects with several Middle Eastern countries, e.g. a project of selling water to Israel, another for importing natural gas for Egypt. Not only that, but it will be the transit point of the exports of natural gas from Egypt to other countries of central Europe like Bulgaria and Romania

In that regard, the last one and half years- since the coming power of the present Turkish government- has witnessed a much more balanced policy towards the main parties of the conflict in the Middle East as witnessed by the following indications:

- A rapprochement with Syria. In regards, contacts between the two countries have been regular at all levels President Bashar Assad has visited Turkey last January for the first time ever by a Syrian President
- Security and economic cooperation with Iran. Abdullah Gul, Turkey's Foreign Minister visited Teheran last January where the foundations for cooperation in those two fields were laid. They included Iranian assistance in tracing the perpetrators of Istanbul bombings last year.
- Objective Turkish positions on the Palestinian- Israeli conflict. The Turkish position in the UN on the Israeli separation wall and the international court of justice is evidence in that regard.

So for the first time, a role for Turkey in the settlement process between Syria and Israel is taking place. Such a role would have never been possible without the changes that befell the Turkish positions of the conflict and its relations wit the main parties.

Bilateral relations:

The current period of the Egyptian- Turkish relations is witnessing many positive developments. For the third consecutive year, a top-level official visit has taken place from one country to the other. President Cezer was in Egypt two years ago, Turkeys Prime Minister visited it last year and President Mubarak has visited Turkey last month. Only last week, two important ministerial visits from Turkey to Egypt took place as the Ministries of Justice and Natural resources paid their visits to Cairo.

An important and long sought bilateral agreement between the two countries was signed for exporting Egyptian Natural Gas to Turkey as well as via Turkey to central Europe. Next month will witness a top-level diplomatic visit from Turkey's Ministry of Foreign affairs for political consultations with Egyptian diplomats.

Moreover, negotiations are currently taking place to sign a free trade agreement between the two countries to enhance their trade exchange, still lagging far behind their political relations 438 million dollars trade volume in 2002- with Egyptian exports amounting to 117 million dollars.

There is also a cultural agreement between the two countries, of which an Executive Protocol is being renewed each 3 years. Within the framework five Turkish students get annual scholarship in Al-Azhar University in Cairo.

Political and Economic reform in the Middle East

Both countries- being leading powers in the region- have clear-cut positions about reform in the Middle East. Turkey, as well as Egypt, considers reform a necessary process in the Middle East. Yet, both think that reform shouldn't be imposed from outside the region. There is no magical formula for that reform process valid for all countries regardless of their different circumstances.

I personally think that the success so far of the multi party system In Turkey and the big strides taken towards economic reform and adopting modern technology is an ample evidence that reform in the region has a greater potential of success if its gradual and takes into consideration the distinctive nature of the regions societies.

To conclude, Egyptian- Turkish relations have future prospects of enhancement and development given the pragmatic policies adopted by the two countries, the vital common interests on political, economic and strategic levels, their regional influences, their international relations and the political will of the two governments and top-officials to achieve that enhancement.

Guest Intervention

Ambassador. Raouf Ghonem*

It is rather difficult to be the last speaker in such a rich symposium characterized by the participation of excellent scholars in different fields of Middle East Politics from Egypt and Turkey.

This last session tackled the issue of " The Future of the Middle East after 9-11", a future which is difficult to predict and pathetic to think of. The term itself " Middle East" became geographically vague and fluid. But anyway, luckily enough, we still have some solid facts. One of those facts is that both Egypt and Turkey are principal players in this part of the world. It is in their interests to have peace and stability in this region and the neighboring areas.

The two most peace threatening problems surrounding Egypt and Turkey are the Palestinian- Israel dispute, and the situation in Iraq. But in spite of the importance of the two problems, both Turkey and Egypt, priorities may not be the same vis-à-vis the elements of each problem.

While we in Egypt appreciate the Turkish sympathetic attitude towards the Palestinians, we have to be frank with our Turkish brothers in telling them that the Turkish- Israeli military cooperation is a source of concern to us, especially with the kind of government existing now in Israel that believes only in military supremacy, and committing all sorts of crimes against humanity and international law.

The Turkish attitude towards the invasion of Iraq and its refusal to permit the use of its territories in the land operations was a source of satisfaction and admiration by the Egyptian people.

The interest of Turkey in Iraq is clear. Top priority is given to the Kurdish question after that comes energy and economic interests. Egyptian interests in Iraq are vital and strategic as Iraq is one of the most important states in the Arab world whether its virtue of history, location, population and wealth.

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* **Former assistant to the Minister of Foreign Affairs for European affairs**

Priorities, as I mentioned before, differ but never the less Egypt and Turkey believe in the importance of ending the military occupation of Iraq and preserving its regional territorial integrity and that Iraq should remain a unified independent political entity.

The collapse of the Soviet Union and the disappearance of the great menace on Turkish borders give Turkey a huge degree of political maneuverability and the freedom of political external extension to build a new regional role in both the former Soviet republics and the Islamic and Arab world.

Inspite of the European aspirations of Turkey, it remains a major power in the Middle East. This fact should be taken into consideration by the Egyptian political planners who should know as well that Egypt enjoys a lot of sympathy within Turkey, and that possibilities of political, economic and cultural cooperation do exist, and should not be neglected by the two sides.

For Ankara, Egypt represents an important partner due to its political weight in the Arab world, it's economic perspectives and its cultural background.

On the other hand, Turkey represents for Egypt a friendly power with an effective political role and a large economy. And if Turkey managed- as we hope- to join the European Union, it could be an important link between Egypt and Europe. Turkey can play a vital role, in coordination with Egypt, to further develop the European policies in favor of a just peace in the Middle East.

Turkey has its clear interests in the Islamic world and the Arab world, and I don't believe that it is willing to sacrifice those interests in spite of its European aspirations.

Turkey in my humble view can be the bridge between the Islamic civilization and the European civilization.

The ties between Egypt and Turkey is too important to the extent that neglecting it could be dangerous for both countries, especially now-a-days when new maps are being drawn for the Middle East by foreign powers that are hostile towards the people of the area, and aim by its new maps to tighten its control on this region with its vast reserves of oil as part of a grand design to control the globe and to enable Israel to force its

hegemony on all its neighbor countries as a further step in realizing the grand imperial scheme of the ultra rightists occupying now the white house in Washington.

This imminent threat towards the region makes it more imperative for Egypt and Turkey as two Middle Eastern important powers to enhance their consultations and cooperation to face up to the dire threats that the entire region is exposed to.

DISCUSSIONS

Ambassador. Nabil Badr –(Head of session)
Ex Ambassador- Egyptian Ministry of Foreign Affairs

These past remarks allow us to highlight two major points. First: Egypt and Turkey are two prominent countries in this region. Second, It is not in the best interest of both of our countries that the map in this part of this world be redrawn in their absence or with inactive participation. This is an issue that must be well defined, not just because it is a priority in the best interest of both countries regardless of the differences in their international interest but also because this reflects the depth and strategic significance of their respective roles whether geographical and geostrategic.

How can we define the lines and methods which allow continuous cooperation -not just a colloquial- to follow-up since it lays the strategic in-depth basis of liberal thinking and openness of discussion which can be an input for policy makers in both countries.

Dr. Meliha Altunisk-
Associate Professor- Middle East Technical University

Just a brief remark to Counselor Hossam El Din Kassem, you talked about more balanced Turkish policies towards the region and you eluded that the AK party government had begun to undertake such policies. I have to say that this started earlier; we talked about rapprochement with Syria in 1998 and as far as I know the military played a very important role once the agreement was signed in consolidating that relationship. Also security and economic cooperation with Iran preceded the AK party government which continued with these policies later on.

Dr. Ola Abou Zeid - Deputy Director of the CPRS

I want to ask Ambassador. Raouf Ghonem, concerning what you mentioned that Egyptians are concerned with military cooperation between Turkey and Israel, I want to ask your excellency when you say "Egyptians" here do you mean the Egyptian government or the Egyptian people? because there is a dichotomy between the formal Egyptian perception regarding the policies and stance of Turkey towards the region and its main issues and the public perception, since some Turkish policies and attitudes seem to be quite acceptable and understandable on the formal level, yet these stance arouse hard feelings among the common Egyptian people.

The question here is: if we want to build bridges between the two countries what should we take into account: is it the formal perception or the common Egyptian perception?

Ambassador/ Raouf Ghonem

I will now speak as a commoner since I am no longer an official anymore. As an assistant to the Minister of Foreign Affairs for European affairs I went to Ankara several times for political consultations and we received a lot of Turkish colleagues in Egypt. I would say that the common feeling within the public opinion is that people are not happy or comfortable with the military cooperation between Turkey and Israel. I don't think that the officials in Egypt differ with that but when I am in an official position I must balance things and try to give a push in relations with Turkey in other areas to make some sort of a balance. I intended to mention that because our Turkish brothers should hear it in order to know that the general feeling about the military cooperation with Israel is not comfortable, perhaps they have something to reply with, especially that the Israeli government now is a very dangerous government that uses military means at all times and in all circumstances. So we don't like to see Turkey as a power supporting Sharon in doing such atrocities in the occupied territories.

Counselor. Hossam El Din Kassem

In response to Dr. Meliha's comment I would like to differentiate between the improvement of relations and the rapprochement and laying the foundation for future relations. The improvement of relations with

Syria began in 1998 and the previous Turkish government played a very important effort in that regard supported by the military and other sectors in the Turkish society, yet we must divide this period into different stages. The first stage witnessed the settlement of their present problems and sources of misunderstandings. The second stage was to build foundations of future relationships, for example future agreements, open consulates, strategic, political, and economic development and this is what I meant with the new government approach in that regard. The previous government didn't leave the situation with Syria in a conflicting situation but it launched the beginning of the first stage, which terminated the sources of troubles, and then began the next stage for laying the foundation for future positive relations.

Comment: (name not defined)

In the previous session, Ambassador. Fathy ElShazly pointed out two possible fields of cooperation between the two countries facing the challenges in the region -especially after 9-11 events- and he mentioned the need for Turkey to issue a policy paper to define the latest Israeli movements. My question is how will such an act- if taken by Turkish officials- will – in a way- put an end to Turkish Israeli cooperation in many field- including military- contribute to the challenges in the region, this would be a kind of an abandonment of the dialogue procedures and policy that Turkey pursues between the countries in the region.

Ambassador. Raouf Ghonem

I didn't ask Turkey to end its relations with Israel. I know that Turkish relations with Israel is important for the political movement in the area but I am talking about Turkey giving the Israeli government the arms and the means to settle the Israeli Palestine conflict by force. Therefore I didn't criticize the overall relations with Israel

Rasha El Dayastee-
4th year Political Science student- Faculty of Economics and Political Science- Cairo University

The issue of Turkish- Arab relations is very crucial because on the culture level the two countries are culturally close to each other. Counselor. Hossam El Din Kassem talked about political visits, but on the cultural level we find less cooperation. For example, he mentioned that only 5 Turkish students come to Egypt every year which is a very small number.

I think we must broaden the cultural interest and cooperation because people in both countries do not know much about each other although both cultures are very similar.

My second remark is about Turkish- Arab relation on the political and economic level, I think on both levels cooperation is very little. For example, we find that Turkey cooperates more with Israel and European countries on the political and economic level than with the Arab countries.

Ambassador Murat Bilhan
Chairman of the Center for Strategic Research (SAM)

I would like to mention some concrete points for future cooperation since we should start to talk about deeds rather than words.

First we propose openly a memorandum of understanding with our counterpart in the Egyptian Ministry of Foreign Affairs to institutionalize this strategic meeting. In my follow-up report I would suggest this and I propose inviting our strategic counterparts in Egypt, which will also include academic delegates.

Secondly there are very good suggestions in all the three Egyptian diplomats presentations. They put remarkable points for follow-up that we will study it.

Thirdly, there are a few points that need clarification. Our Arab friends should not think that Turkish- Israeli cooperation is against there interest. For instance, we never sold to Israel any arms, not even one single bullet until now. It is not in our intention to exchange weapons, our

fields of cooperation with Israel lies in the rescue operations in the Mediterranean, pilot training and water sale of a river that falls directly in the Mediterranean. So Turkish- Israeli relations should not be blown out of proportion. It is essential to balance our relations with Israel and Arab states and it is in the interest of our Arab friends because when we are considered as a country that can be trusted by Israel then we could play the role as a facilitator or a mediator.

We shall be the most trustworthy nation to be entrusted such a duty since all the other countries are committed to one side. If we are committed only to the Arab side then the Israeli side will not trust us. Therefore if you want us to play a proper role in the Middle East we should be equo distant and balanced in our policy toward Israel and the Arabs.

Concerning the excesses of the Israeli government we always and immediately react and raise our voices against it, not only with official statements but also with street demonstrations in support of the Palestians and Arab causes. So I think on the level of people to people context the Egyptian people should be enlightened about what their Turkish brothers and sisters are thinking about. There is a lack of information that we should fulfill and this is one of the tasks of this group.

As for the university, a very good point was mentioned and that is only five Turkish students- who all go to Al Azhar university- study in Egypt and that of course is a very small number and unfortunately there is not one single Turkish student in Cairo University. On the other hand so many Turkish students are ready to come to Egypt and to be educated here but the question is how can this be established.

Ambassador Nabil Badr-
Ex Ambassador- Egyptian Ministry of Foreign Affairs-

Since I was in charge of the cultural international relations in the Egyptian Ministry of Foreign Affairs I would like to make a few comments. First I would like to note that there is a Turkish language department in the Faculty of Arts in Cairo and Ain Shams University. Therefore, it can be easily arranged to draw a protocol between Cairo University and any Turkish university or it can be encompassed within the framework of a general cultural protocol

Secondly, you mentioned that all Turkish students go to Al Azhar and I think that this has something to do with tradition.

Personally, I believe that the cultural dimension is worth great attention because it clarifies many things on the footpath of the future.

Education counselor – Turkish embassy

I want to give some information on cultural agreements between Turkey and Egypt. Turkey grants Egyptian students five doctorate scholarships, five research scholarships and ten Turkish language summer course. In addition, five Egyptian university professors can go to Turkey for ten days all expenses paid. In addition, Egypt grants Turkey three masters degree scholarships and fifteen Arabic language summer courses each year.

Now in Egypt, we have 300 university students, 250 in Al Azhar and the rest are divided between Cairo, Ain Sham and 6th October University. Cairo University had an agreement last year to send Egyptian students to Turkey. In addition, every year we have university student visits to Cairo, which we hope this year will increase.

Counselor. Hossam El Din Kassem

When I spoke about five students, this is the figure of scholarships given by the Egyptian government to Turkish students but there are hundreds of Turkish students who study in Egypt at there own expense as well as there are Egyptian students who study in Turkey at there own expense.

In addition to all the other features of cultural relations that my colleague has already mentioned, the figures I gave were only concerning official governmental scholarships. I thought that it is important to mention those figures because I am talking about the Egyptian policy, which is in itself a reflection of how the public opinion feels about Turkey. I should also mention many other figures concerning the popular relationship: about 45000 tourists come from Turkey each year, in addition to a great sum of investment. One of the biggest factories of Detergents in Egypt is a Turkish factory. Yet in my presentation, I limited myself to the official figures that reflect governmental policy which itself is a reflection of the public opinion towards this country.

Dr. Nadia Mostafa -Director of the CPRS

The two previous sessions determined suggestions to help move from words to deeds. I have previously mentioned the need for a protocol for strategic consultation between the two countries and I think that the proceedings of this colloquial will highlight the areas of common interests and differences, it can be considered as a platform to move forward from since all the discussions highlighted questions about the future that needed to be answered precisely.

Throughout the discussions we have concluded that the region has faced a great external threat and multi aspect challenges whether strategic, political, economic and cultural and that reform is a needed value for all countries in the region yet the question that we must ask: Does Egypt and Turkey face the same amount of challenges imposed by the external variables at the level of the issue of internal reform? Do they face the same challenges from Israel? Do they face the same challenges on the level of security aspects related to the direct relation with the United States, as Turkey is a part of the NATO? Do they face the same amount and degree of challenge emanating from the Iraqi crisis and post Iraqi war and the preparation of the remaking of Iraq?

Secondly we must ask ourselves to what extent do we have to coordinate and cooperate while taking into consideration that the level of coordination and cooperation between regional powers may be looked upon negatively by outside powers that are now inside the regimes. To what extent should we not drop the need for cooperation and coordination without raising negative suspicion at the level of the big powers or neighboring big powers?

Finally what are the leverage that both countries have for influencing the reshaping of the region at the level of the important issues such as the Palestinian and Iraqi issue, the reform issue and especially for maximizing the benefits of cooperation and minimizing the negative aspect of external intervention?

The answers to these questions form a suitable platform for establishing a new sort of consultation where academics and diplomats can join each other together to discuss more and provide answers and contribute to more fruitful relations between Turkey and Egypt.

Final and Concluding report

Turkish and Egyptian perspectives: issues and trends

Dr. Pakinam El Sharkawy

Two days of detailed, deep and fruitful discussions revealed that both Turkish and Egyptian participants share a common agenda of concerns. Although they varied in approaches and concept definitions, they shared mutual interests, admitting that both countries feel the need to avoid competition on regional leadership and urge for the creation of an atmosphere for cooperative leadership in order to manage- at least- regional crises. In order to establish peace and stability both sides of participants believe that the two countries should exchange views in order to launch a process of regional consultations and promote bilateral relations between the two countries which is in itself a great contribution to regional stability since there are many promising fields for cooperation such as: defense industries, energy, trade, agriculture and tourism.

The opening session presented both the Turkish and Egyptian perspectives towards the challenges that the Middle East faced in post 9\11. In his comprehensive contribution, Ambassador Murat Bilhan succeeds in identifying the major trends in the Turkish stance towards regional problems. Most notably, he explained the Turkish model as seen by the Turks not by others. After differentiating between the perceptions of outsiders and of the regional countries towards threats and risks, he summarized both visions and stressed on the importance of relying on regional perspectives and mechanism. While the paper presented by Dr. Nadia Mostafa determined the nature of the Egyptian and Turkish position towards the Middle East after 9\11. She had academically summarized in a comparative way external, regional and internal determinants in shaping the situation of the regional actors -mainly Egypt- towards the Middle East in post 9\11.

The second session covered the American strategy towards the ME in which Dr. Meliha Altunisik discussed -in her paper- the various aspect of the Greater Middle East strategy as a concrete reflection of the transformation happening in the American strategy after 9/11. The

implementation of US strategy faces challenges: in Afghanistan, Iraq and Palestine. The Bush administration has failed to pass the test; the difficulty of transformation in Iraq raises more doubts about the GME project. The lack of process in the Palestinian issue undermines Washington credibility especially with the public opinion. Three of the US allies: Egypt, Jordan and Saudi Arabia criticized the plan as a unilateral effort to impose change from outside beside the lack of reference to government roles.

Dr. Cagri Erhan in his paper "American Foreign policy towards the Middle East: Military aspect" discussed the evolution of US political and military strategies throughout the cold war years and its aftermath. The Gulf war paved the way for huge American military penetration into the region and ensured American presence there. Despite the changes in the essentials of American policy towards the Middle East, two dimension of American policy remained intact: oil and Israel. A new dimension appeared when the US policy makers started to point out a possible "direct threat" from some Middle Eastern countries. Then post 9/11 era brought new dramatic changes to American foreign policy, it is pointed out in the US national strategy document of 2002 or the so called "Bush doctrine" that includes the "pre-emptive strike".

While in his presentation, Dr. Mohamed Kadry Said concentrated on the changes in American military strategy towards the ME after 9\11, and referred in this regards to four aspects: the extension of the geography of the ME, mechanism of change, the security boundaries and the change of values.

The Palestinian issue was the theme of the third session, Dr .Meliha Altunisik explained the balanced Turkish policy towards the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and its aspects. The main philosophy is to keep a working relationship with both parties in order to be able to play a more positive role in serving regional stability.

In the fourth session, the Iraqi question was debated by four speakers. Dr. Ahmed Abdel Halim presentation focuses on the changes occurring in the tools of the American strategy especially in depending more on military power to achieve political targets while policy essence remains the same.

Dr. Hassan Abou Taleb discussed major political dilemmas that appeared following the approval of the Law of Administration for the State

of Iraq for the Transitional Period according to the view of an Egyptian scholar. The main issue is how to end the American occupation to Iraq? The Arab public opinion views the American War against Iraq as "an imperial war" aiming to control the region and its oil and protect Israel. He stated the great difficulties that face building an Iraqi stable democratic state and reviews the criticism for the law of administration, particularly its illegality as coming from a non-elected institution. Both Shiites and Kurds pose serious challenges. Many ambiguities appeared to prove the difficulties facing the political reconstruction in Iraq: the fragile legitimacy of the institutions created under the law of administration and the American military presence.

In her paper " Post war Iraq: an economic perspective to the challenges of a country under invasion", Dr. Sema Kalaycioglu reviewed the state of the Iraqi economy prior to the military intervention and the challenges and opportunities of the post war Iraq. She had scrutinized the actual and potential role of Egypt and Turkey as regional economies in the reconstruction of the Iraqi economy. She concluded that both countries do not hold much of a chance in helping Iraqi reconstruction: they neither participated in the military "mission" against the Saddam regime nor did they take part in the Madrid donor Club, they may increase their trade relations later on when peace work to increase economic relations as well in the future.

Dr. Cagri Erhan compared between the American targets declared to justify the intervention in Iraq and what had been achieved later on. He then analyzed the interim constitution in an attempt to clarify two main problems: the sensitive situation of Kurds and Shiite and the disarmament of Iraq. The Turkish stance towards the future of Iraqi system was also clarified by the speaker in which he stressed that the separation of Iraq is not admissible.

Both the international and regional settings were debated in the fifth session. Dr. Mostafa Elwy explored the situation of the major powers by combining two approaches: the actor oriented and issue oriented. He summarized the stance of EU countries, Russia, Japan and China towards three main issues: security, economic reconstruction and political rebuilding of the state. Then he elaborates more on the major difficulties of the “remaking Iraq” after the war.

In the paper of "War in Iraq: a passive regional context", the author tried to explore the variables affecting the regional actors stance towards the war in Iraq. The paper concluded that the region proved to be very vulnerable to American influence and intervention. Most of the states had conducted silent or cooperative attitudes towards American policies creating a gap between the opposing formal discourses and the actual behavior. Only the states with close relation with US or a more democratic regime had been given a better degree of credibility: the first because of their clear vision towards the reason behind their cooperative action, and the second because of the decentralized structure of decision making that raised the transparency level relatively. All regional responses towards debatable issues had been confined to formal, diplomatic, broad and vague statements without adopting any real policies or detailed programs. The reconstruction of Iraq occupied a wide area of attention of the regional actors.

The challenges facing the Middle East and the future of the region were discussed in detail in the last two concluding sessions.

Dr. Abdel Monem Said mentioned eight main challenges facing the ME region in post 9\11: globalization, ME after 9\11, a changed USA, legitimacy crisis, the Palestinian issue, the reform dilemma, the interdependence of issues and clash of civilization process. The problem is that these challenges had to be faced within a massive imbalance of power between the ME countries and the West.

Ambassador Murat Bilhan referred to the problematic of defining the Middle East in light of different meanings and interpretations widely proposed now. But on the level of the challenges identification, he emphasized on the importance of regional perceptions which opposes the American visions.

On the economic and cultural levels, Dr. Sema Kalaycioglu sited the factors leading to the disintegration among countries of the Middle East. They compete or are engaged in political frictions instead of cooperating. Their common history brings more challenges then opportunities because of the absence of a shared economic interest, thus it is explainable the weak regional support for several issue like Palestine or Iraq. She sited as well the economic and cultural challenges of the Middle

East. It is not feasible to speak about cooperation in the region while there is a lack of confidence and cooperative culture between its actors.

Dr. Haydar Gunver determined the main principles of the Turkish foreign policy, regional stability and cooperative relation were essential targets for the Turkish regional attitude.

On the other hand, Counselor Hossam El Din Kassem Essa referred in his statement to the importance of the multi aspect identity of Turkey. Many factors lead Turkey to formulate a more close relation with Egypt: War against terrorism, being main actors in a moderate Muslim camp, bitter experience with terrorism, political economic reforms slogans and their regional –international weight in settling regional problems. Both countries shared the same vision towards the Middle East and Iraq. The new Turkish government issued a more balanced regional policy: rapprochement with Syria, cooperation with Iran and a more active role in settling the Palestinian- Israeli conflict. Besides, Turkey is an important economic strategic partner for Egypt. The bilateral relations are witnessing many positive developments.

An analysis of the symposiums sessions reveals some areas where agreement over perceptions, approaches and tools appears between both sides of participants while other issues provoked disagreement.

By reviewing the sessions, ***four primary observations*** can be concluded:

First: the definition of the region borders caused a problem for the participants in the symposium. The term Middle East is still geographically vague and fluid, since it had been established on political bases and not on geographical ones, which means excluding or including countries according to US national interests and measures. The complexity of defining the Middle East had been intensified with the introduction of the "Greater Middle East" concept that external-regional forces- especially US- had launched

Second: the political, social and economic regional crises had led to extremism and anti-Americanism, thus the US strategy in response to this challenge is based on the need for transforming the Middle East. A perception gap between the visions of foreign powers in particular America from one side and the regional countries on the other side had been

overflowing strongly therefore intensifying the debate over the Middle East problems.

Third: The Egyptian participants were notably using the same approaches and definitions presenting variant positions. The same goes with the Turkish side. So, for the need of uniting this report, distinction is made between major trends on both sides.

Fourth: Turkey's situation and position raised more discussions especially concerning the Turkish internal model, its regional alliances and its international strategy. On the other hand the debate on Egypt – its models and alliances- was less in degree and scope. The question imposed here is: How can this observation be explained? Although both countries face challenges different in degree and types, many Egyptian participants pointed to the Turkish internal and external situation thus the Turkish participants found themselves always in the position of replying, therefore the amount of attention given to the critical Egyptian situation was limited. This could be seen as an indicator of the dynamism that characterizes the Turkish model in its internal and external aspects, this dynamism imposed the Turkish case on top of discussions. Meanwhile, the situation in Egypt is not revealing whether the same active interaction between political and social internal forces or the same degree of transparency concerning the decision-making on the external level.

Fifth: Old issues had been raised where old debates and arguments had been revived such as the historical dimensions of the Arab -Turkish relations, the Turkish -Western relations and the Turkish -Israeli relations.

The symposium was divided into **seven sessions** covering different demanding issues surfacing in the regional debate in this current critical phase that the Middle East is passing through. Around twenty papers and interventions were presented throughout two days. One of the perceived goals of this gathering was to create a profound dialogue between academic perspectives –presented by scholars- and practical experiences – presented by diplomats.

To summarize major trends and issues discussed and analyzed during these closed sessions, we could observe the importance given to the dilemma of **the relation between the international and regional system.** Regarding the extensive impact of international variables, we could conclude **some major interrelated observations:**

A) Huge challenges face the Middle East after 9-11, thus a wide feeling of regional weakness and vulnerability is prevailing. Foreign intervention is becoming more direct and decisive, so regional maneuvering is vital. The possible regional actions are strictly limited on the level of minimizing losses, like providing technical or humanitarian aid, but rarely extended to the level of initiative action. Even while reacting to foreign interveners, regional powers were working to avoid severe clashes with the super power policies.

B) The complexity of the relation between the international and regional systems one revealed –of course- the benefits befallen on the American hegemonic superpower.

Concerning the assessment of the future of the international system and the sort of interactions between the major powers, the Egyptian and Turkish participants agree on the following: America is on top of the world , exercising its hegemony policies. On the other hand while European powers do not deeply differ with the USA on terms of objectives and goals the means and instruments of reaching these goals had forged differences between America and Europe. In addition, the distance that used to separate the US position from European ones had been narrowed in post war Iraq. Now all the European permanent members in the Security Council arrived to an agreement on all resolutions passed by the United States in the Security Council regarding the future of Iraq. Also, the two parties are now getting along regarding the initiatives proposed by both of them concerning the principles and general orientation of the future of the Middle East. Thus it is evident that the international system limits the space of maneuvering and freedom of action of the countries of the region.

C) The international variables are influential but their impact on the development of the regional roles of the two countries differs. The Egyptian scholars pointed to the new Turkish regional role in both the ex-Soviet Republics and the Muslim world in the post cold war. They believe that Turkey will not sacrifice its vital interests in the Muslim world for the sake of its European aspirations, and in spite of these aspirations Turkey remains a major power in the Middle East. If Turkey succeeds to join the EU - as it hopes- it could be an important link between the Arab-Muslim world and Europe. Turkey could play -according to the participants- a crucial role in coordinating with Egypt to further develop the European policies in favor of a just peace in the region. Turkey could be –from both

the Egyptian and Turkish participants' perspectives- a bridge between Europe and the Middle East (or a much wider Islamic civilization).

Most of the participants –particularly the Turks- had emphasized on the strategic location of both countries that allows them to play an important role in many regions. Turkey -for example- is a Mediterranean power, a Balkan power, a Caucasus power, an European and Asian power. Turkey perceives for itself a new powerful regional role in many regional circles, one of which is Central Asia where it sees itself as the only -or may be the first- economic power. As for Egypt, it is a Mediterranean power, an African power and an Arab power. If these two major powers cooperate no other power can easily break peace and stability in the region and in the case of crises each country will help the other (for ex: President Mubarak mediation during the Turkish- Syrian crisis in 1998).

D) The linkage between the external and the internal is only one side of the equation, the other side is the interdependence between military, economic and cultural aspects. Changing the region is required by most international actors – mainly the USA – which creates a lot of new challenges for the region, the most dangerous of all are the cultural challenges (particularly emphasized on in the discourse of the Egyptian participants). The American superpower is using different tools to implement its perspective in reshaping the region. It is crucially important to see that security issues have been located on top of the American agenda and that all these tools serve these issues since it is no longer just an economic transformation but a value change which targets more sensitive areas such as the media and religious educational system and discourses. Reviving Islam to be liberal democratic is a predominant and prevailing issue in American think tanks perspectives.

E) As long as governments -like the Egyptian and Turkish- are the ones who decide what they define as national interests, while people respond differently to events, the gap between the formal stances and popular or scholars attitudes was strongly perceived and debated during the discussions. Most the speakers were keen on making such a distinction while analyzing any issue.

By assessing the sessions, we could identify **four main interrelated issues** governing the discussions as a whole:

FIRST: THE MODEL OF CHANGE AND ITS DYNAMICS

This was the first issue to gain the attention of the participants. Words such as "change" and "transformation" were commonly used during the sessions which reflect a common understanding of the crucial and fast changes occurring in our world today that are affecting our region.

There was a general acknowledgment between participants that the region is in desperate need of change. The Turkish participants were stronger and more resourceful defenders of such changes stating that despite resistance the region will have to transform itself to adjust to global conditions-- not necessarily according to Western standards- due to the necessities imposed by modernity, while emphasizing on the fact that modernization is not westernization. The Turkish participants highlighted that not only the US but also globalization dictates on the region such a change to adjust itself. Even before 9/11 the world was already fundamentally changing. In the post cold war era two grand competing theories appeared: "End of history" and "Clash of civilization". The 9/11 events were viewed by some scholars as an affirmation of the second theory. Both paradigms reflected a particular western perception of the future world.

Although the Turkish and Egyptian participants varied in their view concerning the role and nature of the external dynamics of change, they shared a common belief in giving priority to internal dynamics.

While the Turkish participants stated that the dynamics of transformation could come from the exterior as well as from the interior when the later is not powerful enough, they stressed that in both cases the dynamics of change must be peaceful and non- violent for example: the pressure of civil society, peaceful opposition, diplomatic and economic incentives.

As for the Egyptian participants, they underlined the importance that issues must be discussed mainly from within the region in order to reach an indigenous and modern perspective that is suitable to the cultural and social specifities of the region and that foreign intervention in the region is widening and rising to its peak thus preventing internal dynamics from achieving change in the region.

In this context the major question raised by the Egyptian participants was: how can we achieve reform? This question was posed in light of the increased resentment that a long time has passed without any action taken by Arab governments in that matter and that although the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is one reason for hindering reform, the major setbacks comes from inside the societies themselves.

Thus a pessimistic tone homogenized the discourse of the Egyptian participants when speaking about the practical steps to be taken to achieve reform especially in light of what is taking place in Iraq and Palestine.

Both sides of participants showed their appreciation to the role of the civil society and they related it to an important problematic: the link between civil society organizations and international actors. Civil societies –as some Egyptians participants highlighted- should play a significant role in the reform process because we are living in the era of governance, but its contribution should be through the cooperation with government or the private sector and not by linking themselves directly with external powers. Therefore it must be "a tri-partied" cooperation between the civil society, government and international circles. The Turkish participants viewed the contact between civil societies in Egypt and Turkey as an excellent idea, giving emphasis on these kinds of transnational links which are- in their view- becoming more important in facilitating democratization in the region.

The international variables of reform are viewed differently by the Turkish participants. They clarified that throughout the Turkish experience there has been an active EU involvement in the Turkish reform process, working with the government and several civil society organizations and that Turkey witnessed several debates surrounding this issue. Despite the fact that reform is ultimately an internal process, the Turkish experience of reform in all its phases shows the importance of external factors. The Turkish participants believe that the external environment can provide opportunities for reform yet never-the -less the issue of the outside link remains very sensitive.

Although most participants criticized the GME initiatives, the objections were more obvious in the Egyptian interventions in which the credibility of the American initiative was doubted and resentful questions

were asked such as: What is the content of these initiatives? Can democracy be applied or conciliated with the extensive American military presence, which represents a threat to our countries national security, independence and interests? A point of view expressed by an Egyptian participant sees these initiatives as a public relations campaign, which aims to improve the US image in the region. On the other hand another Egyptian intervener saw no contradiction between democracy and its enforcement from the outside since security is probably the most important value and we are expected to accept this in order to maintain communications.

As for the Turkish participants, they perceived the GME initiative as an important element in the US policy towards the region in the near future. The US political strategy towards the Middle East seems to be part of a transatlantic bargain in which the Bush administration is trying to renew the basis of cooperation against common challenges. They noted that the Alexandria conference and the outcome of the Arab League summit in Tunis were two examples of the regions effort to formulate a regional response to this issue. They stated that in modern societies like EU there are established rules and institutions that can initiate reform, but in the Middle East or in places where democratic culture is not deeply rooted there is a need for outside intervention, even though in some cases the source of change may come from the inside but it may not be permanent.

The Turkish participants clarified Turkeys' approach towards the Greater Middle East initiative: Turkey see itself as a regional country hoping to contribute in the economic, social, cultural and educational aspects of a regional effort for transformation believing that such an initiative should come from the countries of the region who recognize the need for reform and a dialogue between international and regional communities is important. The confidence problem concerning the objectives of the West and especially the US must be overcomed through enhancing negotiations in the Arab- Israeli conflict and constructing democracy in Iraq based on social consensus.

The Turkish and Egyptian participants shared some uncertainties towards the Great Middle East initiative each adopting a different perspectives. Both discourses coming from dissimilar position on map of states that America sees that it must witness immediate or later change, we can notice variation in the starting points and in the ground on which they establish their stances. Some Egyptian participants have a more negative

view concerning the effect of the initiative on Arab countries compared with Turkey which will gain more benefits from this initiative.

Both Turkey and Egypt represent models of internal change in which the relation between Islam, state and society is raised thus to play "*the role model*" was one of the main themes in the discussions held on change and transformation. Main questions were widely debated in the symposium such as;: How should both countries be presented as a model of change in the region? To what extent do they confront constrains from the outside especially by American initiatives or intervention? Which of these two is a more suitable model for the region? Is there a common ground between these two models? Or is the region in need of a new model?

Most Egyptian participants stressed on the perception of Turkey and Egypt as a model of a modern and moderate Muslim state in the region thus both can play an important role in facing the accusations towards Islam, yet it is evident that the Greater Middle East project allocates Turkey this new role as a model for the region to follow besides new roles for other states such as Israel . This new role for Turkey is endorsed by the shifting in the political weight of regional actors and the rebuilding of axis in the region. The Egyptian participants showed concern towards the impact of this initiative on the Arab region. Although some pointed to problematics in the Turkish model such as: the identity problem, duality between secularism and Islam, they still presume the role given to Turkey within the American strategy and they argue for the possibility of another relation model between Islam- society-state- than that the Turkish model presents.

For some Turkish participants , Turkey did not benefit from being labeled as a role model and that it is a misconception to view Turkey as a tool in the hands of Western powers nor will it play a role in the Islamic world towards the West. Thus it is more important to see the role Turkey assigns itself in the region rather than the role the others want it to play. The Turkish participants refuse to present Turkeys experience as a model but mainly to provide "lessons" for those who want to walk in its steps thus they clearly object projecting Turkey as a front line state in this debate since it has its all-unique characteristics.

They accentuated that the "so-called Turkish model" can not be a blueprint for other countries. As a Muslim country with a secular system, democratic experience with economic transformation and links with EU

and US, Turkey can provide "interesting lessons" in the transition to democracy, the healthy relation between secularism and democratization, and the importance of combining between the internal and external process for reform in different phases.

There is a general feeling between the Turkish participants about Turkeys exceptionality whether geographically or on the level of identity and ideology while other countries in the region have different situations and conditions for change. They see that the Turkish secularization process is unique and difficult to replicate because it was largely imposed from above. Although they acknowledged that democracy does not necessarily require radical secularization it necessitates some division between religion and state. At the same time, they believe that no democracy is perfect, even the Turkish democracy, and that is why they do not aspire to be a model.

While for the Egyptians participants, whether Turkey is aspiring to be a model or not, Western and American initiatives clearly refers to Turkey as a model. This stance is due to secularism which is in the heart of the democratic model of the Turkish experience, but it is debatable from the viewpoint of some Egyptians who wonder: what will be the case if internal reform forces in a country like Egypt lead to an Islamic style of reform? Some of the Egyptian participants stressed that the Turkish model is not the only way of organizing the role of Islam in Muslim and Arab countries system.

While discussing the Turkish model, a core concept appears to be the clue in understanding this model; its potentialities, targets, mechanisms and challenges. This concept is ***secularism***.

The Legacy of Ataturk has always been the pride of the Turkish nation, it has been seen by the Turks as the first modernization project in the underdeveloped world at the beginning of the 20^{th} century. The Turkish model is not only a parliamentary democracy but a secular democracy which they are very proud of.

According to Turkish participants, Islam and secularism are quite in conformity with each other. Islam is a religion between God and man while secularism is a state system, which has nothing to do with heaven but only with earth. The importance of the Turkish experience is to prove that Islam is compatible with democracy and secularization. The problem is not

embedded in Islam itself but in trying to organize, the whole political system based on religion then it becomes rationally complicated.

The core of the Turkish perspective towards reform can be summarized in the following statements; secularism played a crucial role for reforming democratization, without secularization, reform nor can democracy be sustainable. Secularism can not be interpreted versus Islam or any religion; it is freedom of religion which is an integral part of human rights. Turkish scholars in the symposium do not believe in different tones of Islam and that Turkey is not a "mild Islamic state".

Some Egyptian participants objected to the Turkish interpretation of secularism and said "no one should impose his/her interpretation as the only truth", noting that " it is important to avoid imposing tailored ideologies" and that "Turkey represents a secular reading of Islam". Egyptian participants do not see the Turkish interpretation as the ultimate; there are different relations between Islam, state and society which are applied in other Muslim countries. In those experiences, some controversy exists between secularism and Islam as a guided formation for organizing society and state. In this regard, Islam -as a public sphere- is conflicting with secularism..

Yet overall, the participants shared a positive evaluation of the Turkish democracy. The Turkish experience was widely interesting for the Egyptian participants especially the dilemma of the duality between secularism and Islam. Having a so called Islamic Party as the Justice and Development Party -AKP- on top of a secular regime was an essential comment posed by most Egyptian participants. On the other hand, difference between AK party and other secular parties was doubted in the mind of some who look at the difference between them as cosmetic only. The Turkish participants responded to this issue based on two points:

- First : The victory of the AKP -which was newly established- was a reaction to what was happening domestically in Turkey. Turkey was witnessing one of its worst economic crisis in the history of the republic since 1945, a failure in its economic policies, corruption, banking scandals..etc. This resulted in uniting the rightist elements in election under one flag unlike the leftist parties that were unable to unite. Thus the AKP victory was a reaction to the mismanagements of the previous Turkish

government in the past two years. So the Turkish participants stressed that it is wrong to conceive this party as an Islamists party.

- Second: The AKP itself is considered to be a coalition party. Although there is emphasize on the Islamic roots of some of the party members, it must not be ignored that there are other members that belonged to the right of the centralist parties in the past. The party members define themselves as conservative democrats. The Turkish Prime Minister repeatedly stressed that he is not Islamist and that he does not support political Islam and that he represents the whole people. One of the important statements said by the Prime Minister was that he would like to see a secular Europe and not a Christian club, this refers to what secularism means in the Turkish society and for the AKP as well.

SECOND: THE AMERICAN POLICY AND STRATEGY TOWARDS THE MIDDLE EAST

What are the targets and the tools used? Did a real change occur in them? The impact of 9/11 on US policies was controversially seen by the Turkish and Egyptian participants: the later saw that there was a tremendous change in the essence of the American policies in the post cold war era especially after 9/11, while the former sees a change only on the level of tools not the essence of the policies .

For Egyptian participants, the extensive use of military power and the pretext of fighting terrorism to achieve political and economic objectives are the new dimensions in the American strategy. Since 1947 and until now the US vision towards the Middle East has not changed dramatically, it is a stable policy for all American administrations (Democratic or Republican).

The Turkish participants believe more in an American rethinking of its policies that led to a change in their priority allocating the maintenance of stability and democratization as their first target . September 11 events had a tremendous impact on US foreign policy; it led to a fundamental rethinking of the notions of security and threat perceptions in Washington. "The New strategy" led to the identification of a new geographical area called the Greater Middle East as a " problematic area" and "the main source of threats".

The symposium witnessed a general belief that Afghanistan and Iraq are the first two cases in implementing the American pre-emptive strike strategy and the participants shared mutual concerns about the American military presence which expanded in participant numbers and areas different in degrees and attitudes.

During the symposium the Egyptian scholars discourse seemed more critical to the US targets in the region and the tools used. Many Egyptians participants had confirmed one important American aim: To end two sources of threats on Israel : Iraq and Iran. The security of Israel was seen on top of the American agenda, gaining the same importance as controlling the oil. So within this context all the American policies like; the use of the military power in the Middle East, pressuring for domestic change, materializing the GME initiate, encircling Iran and pressuring the parties in the region to get rid of their weapons of mass destruction while excluding Israel, strengthen alliance with Israel for exterminating Palestinian resistance in the name of fighting terrorism, are evaluated. New maps are to be drawn for the Middle East by foreign powers to tighten its control on this region and its oil and to enable Israel to force its hegemony on all its neighbor countries. The USA is heading towards dealing with forces inside countries and not with governance themselves. This imminent threat makes it more imperative for Egypt and Turkey to enhance cooperation.

Egyptian participants pointed to the existence of a wide gap in perceptions in the West and the Middle Eastern countries leading to an atmosphere of Clash of civilization. In Western minds, the Middle East is related to terrorism, evils and troubles. Some Western trends see that Islam and the conditions under which Muslims have been living create an environment that nourishes terrorism. In order to eradicate terrorism, a western process of reforming Islamic societies should be embarked upon with urgency. On the other side, most of the Muslims see that the US policies provoke Islamic terrorists.

Most importantly, we must not overuse the word terrorism without definition. Although there was no agreed definition of terrorism between the participants, the Turkish interveners defined it vaguely by the use of violence to achieve certain ends and that the circle of violence should be stopped anywhere in the world. While the Egyptian interveners did not elaborate in detail concerning this concept. Both sides of participants

believe that the two countries should coordinate their positions regarding international efforts to eradicate terrorism and to start a joint effort to reveal the real wise, moderate and tolerant face of Islam.

Both Egypt and Turkey have their shortcomings: Egypt like all other Arab country could not take firm action towards the Israeli-Palestinian conflict nor was Turkey able to prevent the military intervention in Iraq even when Turkey offers to play an intermediation in the Israeli- Syria peace negotiation. It was just a gesture of good will not necessarily possessing a strong prospect.

Some Egyptian scholars emphasized the importance of creating regional cooperation to break this circle of weakness and passivity. But the Turkish participants believe that being divided in different fronts of states is not in the interest of the region and that alliances to counter any kind of external influence is not easy and might fail. Thus they believe that we should act together but not as a counter front to the alliances led by the US nor to fight them under the Islamic flag .

THIRD: REGIONAL PROBLEMS

Although the priorities of both countries may not be the same vis-à-vis the elements of each problem, the participants in the seminar agreed that the two most peace threatening problems are the Arab- Israeli conflict and the situation in Iraq.

The Iraqi question is strongly related to the previously discussed issues. Turkish participants locate the Iraqi issue as an important turning point in the evolution of the international system. The aftermath of 9/11 was divided by the war in Iraq. This war eroded the international sympathy felt for the US. Creating a sharp international division doubting the credibility of US which it was already facing because of its policies towards the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Both Egyptians and Turkish scholars agree on the exclusive role of the American administration in Iraq and on the US usage of the future system of this country as a model of change towards democracy that must be followed by the entire region. Meanwhile, the American military presence in Iraq gave rise to anti-American feelings in the region, particularly that it seems that Americans- as a force of occupation- will stay for a long time. There is an agreement on the deterioration of the US

credibility in front of governments and societies and especially within the public opinion circles.

The participants also agree that the Iraqi crisis brought Turkey and Egypt closer; they share the same vision towards the future of Iraq and they agree on preserving the territorial integrity of Iraq. Turkey's refusal to permit the use of its territories in land operations was a source of admiration by Egyptian participants. The Turkish initiative in early 2003 which was followed by a series of meetings of foreign ministers of Iraq's neighbors and Egypt was important in coordinating their positions.

Despite differences in priorities, both participants believe in the necessity of having an independent and unified political entity in Iraq. The interest of Turkey in Iraq is clear: top priority is given to the Kurdish question followed by economic interests..

Both sides of participants objected to the US strategy use of the minority issue as a card of stress on Turkey and Egypt. The Turkish participants noted that although secular democratic system has allowed Turkey to be a melting pot for different ethnic groups, still the Kurdish issue in the Southern Eastern parts of Turkey exists and it is a card played with against its national integrity which is unacceptable. The Egyptians speakers gave more importance to the Kurdish issue than the Turkish participants declaring that it is a regional issue and not just a Turkish one.

On the other hand, an Egyptian participant stressed that Iraq is witnessing a process of remaking or reshaping by the Americans thus there is no chance- neither for Turkey or Egypt- to play any role. The USA is trying to make Iraq a reformation model for the region, especially that America is maintaining contact and working with allies in solving problems, meaning that everything is planned outside the region and solutions will be imposed on it. This could explain the uncertainties about future roles of regional powers. What proves- as an Egyptian speaker stated- that it is a remaking process rather than a reconstruction process is that, for the first time in the region Islam is mentioned as only one source – not the main source – of legislation. The Iraqi constitution was written under the direct sponsorship of the USA thus it was not a genuine Iraqi constitution. In this imposed constitution, a new element has been added which is federalism. It is an element that Arabs are not used to, whether at the geographic or sectarian level. Such sectarian and ethnic federalism

gives the Kurds in Iraq the right to veto not only for the principles of the interim constitution but also the permanent constitution. So this federalism inhere the possibilities of declaring an independent Kurdish state.

Both sides of participants were suspicious of this imposed federal solution. For some Egyptian participants, the federal model adopted in the constitution in Iraq is dangerous, especially regarding its consequences for the future integration of the Arab states. The Sudanese case present a bad model regarding this scenario because the peace negotiation is built on dividing Sudan into two states in the near future. As for the Turkish participants, the federation in Iraq should be geographically based not ethnically nor religiously.

The Egyptian participants showed great concern regarding the Arab Israeli conflict stating that it is in the interest of the US to resolute it. Many negative indicators increased Egyptian participant criticism towards this issue such as the killing of Sheikh Ahmed Yassin, Sharon endangering the whole area by his project of unilateral withdrawing from the Gaza strip and its effect on the treaty between Egypt and Israel. Egyptian interveners asked for a clarification of the Turkish vision and attitude towards: Turkey's evaluation of Israeli state terrorism against the Palestinians , the Turkish stance from the Jerusalem issue, how Turkey could use its good relations with Israel to protect the Palestinian people and their rights, not just their human rights but their political rights as well since it is essential to define the problem as a political one.

The Turkish participants responded by defining the Turkish approach to Palestinian issue as a balanced one. It is very well justified in the Palestinian minds- as one Turkish participant stated- because they understand Turkeys balanced policy. It was stressed upon that Turkey is not against the Jews but against the occupation of Arab lands. Turkish scholars indicate that if they loose the confidence of the Jewish state then they will not be impartial and the Jews will not trust them as mediators that could play an active role in the Middle East.

economic cooperation among Middle East countries as a necessary pre condition for enhancing the peace process while Arabs wanted to solve political problems firsthand.

Despite many previous suggestions of not repeating old arguments when dealing with old issues, Turkish- Israeli relations were discussed over and over. From the Egyptian participants view, Turkish-Israeli military cooperation is a source of concern especially with the Sharon government in power, because the conflict with Israel is seen as a Muslim – Israeli conflict, that is why many people in Muslim countries have real hard feeling about the cooperation between a Muslim country like Turkey and Israel. But the Egyptian government understands Turkey's justification in entering this alliance.

There was some controversy surrounding the timing of the strategic cooperation between Israel and Turkey especially that many analysts put Israel, Turkey and US in the same boat. Beside other sensitive issues were raised such as: Turkey's view towards Jerusalem, its stance from Israeli state terrorism and who is responsible for endangering stability in the region- the Palestinians or Israelis- , the differentiation between "Palestinian terrorists" as determined by Israel and the "right of resistance" of the Palestinians people to gain their independence, state and rights and finally the Israeli monopoly of mass destruction weapons in the region.

While the Turkish participants response came to assert that the Turkish-Israeli relations should not be defined as strategic cooperation or a military alliance because they are just normal relations and cooperation based on mutual national interests and that these relations are definitely not against Arab interests especially that some Arab countries have similar relations with Israel such as Egypt. These relations are mainly confined to economic relations. Strong economic relations with Israel exist because of a free trade agreement signed since 1996 which Turkey could not yet sign with Egypt . Even, the course of relations between Turkey and Israel goes up from time to time and slows down also. Turkey is the only country whom both sides- Arabs and Israelis- have confidence in.

Many Egyptian interventions reflected a concern in Arab minds: Turkey considers its relations with Arab countries as a tool used to serve an independent variable which is its relations with the West – especially USA & EU-.

In addition many external challenges surfaced to make an intensive and effective regional cooperation a hard task.

From the Turkish participants perspective, there is no shared interest (especially economic) that could enforce a common action against threats. Except Turkey and Israel, no other country in the Middle East truly accomplished trade and capital liberalization. Egypt and Turkey are among the most likely pair for cooperation. A bilateral free trade agreement must be immediately signed between them to promote economic relations. Sectarian cooperation may give promising options for both countries. Many mutual regional projects in the field of electricity, natural gas etc.. can be beneficial for both countries. While cooperation in the political sphere might have limited horizons since it can be slowed due to the American leader personal agenda and priorities.

Both sides agree on an important suggestion: that we have to singularize our efforts and to convert our missions on many joint interests. We–as a Turkish speaker said- should accept each other as present facts and we need each other. At the same time, an Egyptian participant called for dealing with Turkey as " is" and it has to deal with us as "we" are and to look for common ground in the future. Thus Turkish- Israeli relations could be invested to enhance the situation for the Palestinians and to play a positive role for regional stabilization. So seizing the opportunities provided by facts could be more beneficial for both the two countries and the region than keeping a language of criticism and exchanging suspicions.

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The Center for Political Research and Studies was established in 1986 as an autonomous research unit affiliated to the Faculty of Economics and Political Science (FEPS), Cairo University.

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